

The Biblical Perspective: The Word of GOD

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Rejection of the Foundation

On July 6th of 2022, an alarming poll result was announced by Frank Newport of the Gallup polling organization. His article begins by declaring: **“A record-low 20% of Americans now say the Bible is the literal word of God, down from 24% the last time the question was asked in 2017, and half of what it was at its high points in 1980 and 1984.”**

Then he adds: “Meanwhile, a new high of 29% say the Bible is a collection of “fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man.”¹ It is a fact that when people abandon the conviction that the Bible is GOD’s sufficient, infallible, inspired Word, they begin to re-interpret the Bible in ways that deviate from the way the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS interpreted the Bible.

You see, as we will prove later, JESUS and His Prophets and Apostles believed that the Bible was the exalted, unchallengeable literal Word of GOD. And only those who view the Bible in the way that JESUS and His Apostles viewed it can accurately be categorized as “someone who is following JESUS”.

Thus, those who take a lower view of the Bible than our LORD and His Apostles reveal the deterioration of their faith by taking the Bible less and less literally. Eventually, this individual slipping away from the foundation of GOD’s Word leads to the creeping deconstruction of the faith of each following generation.

¹ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394262/fewer-bible-literal-word-god.aspx>

Within this downward spiral of apostasy, because former generations of Christians had unshakable trust in the Bible, they commonly assumed that subsequent generations would unconditionally continue to believe in the Bible. Thus, in their confidence, the many reasons that exist that provide reliable confirmation of the Scriptures were not adequately passed from one generation to the next.

Therefore, in a post-Christian culture, the average Christian who remains faithful to the LORD still loses the ability to defend what was once universally accepted. Church **leaders** don't pass on sound reasons to believe, Christians don't learn why their beliefs are true, and more and more people eventually fall away from the faith.

But faith in GOD's Word not only sustains us individually, as Christians, it also restrains evil in the culture. So eventually, a post-Biblical society will forget that the Bible was the bedrock that firmly upheld every decent institution of their civilization in the past.

Then slowly and steadily, the preservation of certain key Biblical principles that remained in the hearts and minds of the population will evaporate. And when the final support system of tradition collapses, lawless ideas like humanism, statism, socialism, hedonism, and selfism will rush in to fill the void.

In the world's growing post-Christian environment, we can ask the individuals who fall away from the faith what led them to abandon their convictions. But we should know beforehand that the answers they provide will always reveal to the astute observer evidence of a dissolving trust in the Bible.

Dr. Chuck Lawless is Dean of Doctoral Studies and Vice-President of Spiritual Formation at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, where he also serves as Professor of Evangelism and Missions.² And, in an article entitled "**8 Reasons Some Young People Are Walking away from Their Faith**", he writes: ***"It's alarming to me, actually. As a pastor and as a professor, I've had to deal with young people who were raised in seemingly strong Christian homes, yet who've now turned away from their Christian upbringing. Frankly, I'm grateful that some of these young people still trust me enough to talk to me—and in those conversations, I've learned some of the reasons they've walked in a new direction."***

Then, within reason number 6, he writes: ***"Others have told them, 'This is the Word of God,' but no one's helped them know why we believe that about the Word."***³ Among reasons such as never making the faith of their elders their own, seeing too much hypocrisy among Christians, surrendering to the influence of America's post-Christian culture, and facing opposition to honest questions while not receiving acceptable answers, we see each reason consistently points back to an abandonment

² <https://chucklawless.com/about/>

³ <https://churchanswers.com/blog/8-reasons-some-young-people-are-walking-away-from-their-faith/>

of the Bible on the part of the person who has left the faith, of the leaders who failed them, and of their society as a whole.

To make their faith their own, they simply needed to seek out the many confirmations of the Bible in the world around them. From the evidence of Noah's flood in the study of geology to the evidence for Adam and Eve in the study of genetics, there are mountains of proof that confirm the Bible for all who take the time to find them.

To answer the problem of hypocrisy in the church, they simply needed to study the Scriptures enough to learn that such people are not truly following the words of the Bible, therefore all hypocrites are labeled as self-deceived by James⁴.

Also, since the Bible warns us that “**evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse**”⁵ and “**apostasy**” (or a vast falling-away) would precede the antichrist and the return of JESUS⁶, Christian hypocrisy confirms Biblical prophecy!

The answer to the problem of a lack of discipleship in their lives wasn't to abandon the faith, but to seek after the LORD even more, and pursue fellowship with like-minded Christians who observe all that they learn. After all, we are disciples of JESUS, not disciples of men! And the LORD uses His Word to guide us in the faith, and commands us to test all teaching against His Word. So, discipleship is yet another aspect of the Christian journey that relies on the study of the Bible.

The answer to the problem of cultural influences is to realize (through the study of the Bible) that the culture is in rebellion against GOD, it is under the influence of satan, and all who participate in the lawlessness that the culture currently promotes will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. But only those who are grounded in the Word of GOD can see and believe these facts.

The solution to the problem of a lack of answers to their honest questions was not abandoning the faith, but digging deeper into the Word to find the answers they were seeking. The Bible contains all the answers we need to follow JESUS in holiness and righteousness. So, when church leadership lets us down, we can know that GOD's Word will never let us down!

In the end, people fall away from the faith because they (and those around them) lack interest in, misunderstand, neglect, doubt, and eventually abandon the foundation of the faith, which is the Bible.

Selection and Inspiration

⁴ But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. James 1:22

⁵ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Timothy 3:13

⁶ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed... 2 Thessalonians 2:3

So, today we will explain why Christians call the Bible “the Word of GOD” as we consider how the Bible must be the foundation of all our reasoning, the source of our worldview, and held up in our hearts and minds as the ultimate standard of truth!

How do we know who created the earth and how long it took Him to do it? Where can we learn when and how death entered the world? What source can inform us about people like Noah, Abraham, Sarah, or Moses? Who provides us with all this foundational information?

Can we learn for certain about the doctrine and deeds of JESUS by searching random websites on the internet or by dialing 411 on the telephone? No! We know this because the only infallibly reliable source that can reveal those things to mankind is the Bible.

If Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John had not written down their records of the things JESUS said and accomplished during His earthly ministry, how could anyone believe and be saved?

Truly, no one can be saved without hearing the Gospel from the witnesses GOD chose to record it. So, John wrote about his gospel: **He who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.**⁷

Likewise, near the end of His account, John wrote: **Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**⁸

Similarly, Peter explained: **“God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. God raised Him up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.”**⁹

These verses and many more confirm that the Bible was written down so that we could **know** the truth, **believe** the truth, **remember** the truth, and **obey** the truth. But someone will say to us: “Then how were people saved before the 66 books of the Bible became written testimony?” Now, to that excellent question, we should answer: “They

⁷ John 19:35

⁸ John 20:30-31

⁹ Acts 10:38-42

received the testimony of the Prophets, Apostles, and Disciples of the LORD first hand, by word of mouth!”

Yes, while the LORD’s chosen Prophets, Apostles, and Disciples were alive, they often spread the Word of the LORD by preaching it orally. But typically, before they finished their race on the earth, GOD inspired them to write the words of their testimony down so we could hear their voices long after they went to be with Him.

Moses first orally spoke to Israel the same words he later wrote down. Isaiah first announced the prophecies he received from the LORD before the book of Isaiah was recorded. And men like John first proclaimed the gospel from city to city before they recorded in writing what they saw and heard.

Meanwhile, Scripture is not just a random written record compiled by human eyewitnesses. No, each witness was chosen beforehand by GOD to testify of what they observed during their lifetimes. Also, many of the men who wrote down their personal testimonies explained in multiple places (and in various ways) that the HOLY SPIRIT was moving them to write down all the words that they recorded. And this is where the word “**inspiration**” comes from.

For example, Paul explains about Scripture: **From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**¹⁰

First, we must note that Paul told Timothy it is “**the Holy Scriptures**” that make us “**wise for salvation**” in JESUS, not personal experiences, traditions, philosophies, or man-made religious denominations. So, if we abandon all (or parts) of the Holy Scriptures, we cannot be wise for salvation in JESUS!

Second, the Greek word Paul used, which we translate into English as “**Scripture**” is “**graf-ay**”, and it means “**writings**”; as in “**that which has been written down**”. But Paul makes it clear that he was not referring to just any ancient written documents!

No, he was very specifically referring to the written documents that he called “**the Holy Scriptures**” in his letter. Paul used the Greek definite article that is the equivalent to our English word “**the**” and the Greek word “**hee-er-os**”, which means “**sacred or consecrated to GOD**”.

And third, we know from the quotations of the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS that all 37 books of what many people call “**the Old Testament**” were what Paul was writing

¹⁰ 2 Timothy 3:15-17

about. Yes, those 37 books were the only “holy writings” Timothy have known from his childhood!

Obviously, the 27 books written by the Apostles and Disciples of JESUS that many people call “**the New Testament**” are now part of the Holy Scriptures too. But the books that Timothy “**knew from childhood**” that could make him “**wise for salvation**” in JESUS are the same books that many unwise people now reject as part of how we truly understand our salvation in CHRIST.

Fourth, as we consider this passage, we must note that the Greek word translated in the passage as “**inspiration of GOD**” comes from a compound Greek word that combines the word “**theh'-os**” which means “**GOD**”, and the word “**pneh'-o**”, which means “**to breathe**”. So, some English translations render this word very literally with the term “**GOD-breathed**”.

Just as our physical mouths cannot speak unless our lungs supply us with air to pass by our vocal cords, over our tongue, and through our lips, the men who wrote the Bible could not have done so unless they were empowered to write down the books of the Bible by the HOLY SPIRIT!

Thus, it is important to note that the Greek word “**panyoo'-mah**” that we often translate into English as “**Spirit**” literally means “**air, wind, or breath**”. Yes, the same Greek word that we frequently translate as “**spirit**” is the root of many of our English words that have to do with air, such as *pneumonia* and *pneumatic*.

When demons *inspire* a human being, they lead people to speak evil words, think evil thoughts, and perform evil actions. But when the HOLY SPIRIT inspires a human being, He leads people to speak righteous words, think righteous thoughts, and perform righteous works.

So, spirits still inspire people each day. Therefore, Paul wrote: “**as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**”¹¹

Alternatively, he also explained: “**You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.**”¹²

Yes, because spirits invisibly interact with humans on a regular basis, John wrote: **Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in**

¹¹ Romans 8:14

¹² Ephesians 2:2

the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.¹³

Like sailboats propelled along by the wind, those who are headed to hell are inspired by dark spiritual forces that lead them to violate the commandments of GOD. However, those who are headed to the kingdom of GOD are inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD to keep His commandments and live them out while bearing fruits like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.¹⁴

Yes, all of us are inspired by unseen spiritual forces each day, so spiritual inspiration is a common fact of life. Therefore, it is not hard to comprehend how GOD chose a select group of individuals, called them to be His Prophets and Apostles, and placed each of them at certain select periods in history. Then, He inspired them (and them alone) to pass along the holy writings we call the Bible. And those GOD-breathed writings serve as a record of what each person needs to be **“wise for salvation”** in the MESSIAH and **“thoroughly equipped for every good work”**.

So, Peter wrote: Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

Please understand, the Greek word we transliterate into English as **“prophecy”** is **“prof-ay-ti'-ah”**, and it simply means **“a divinely inspired communication”**. So, based on Paul's words to Timothy that declare that **“all Scripture”** is divinely inspired, we can conclude that **“all Scripture”** is technically considered **“prophecy”**. Over time, the word **“prophecy”** has become specifically associated with **“divinely inspired communications that foretell of future events”**, but that is not the only definition the Apostles would have applied to that Greek word. No, when we look at the writings of Peter and Paul, and study the actual definition of the word Peter used, we see that Peter was using the word **“prophecy”** to refer to all of **“the holy Scriptures”**.

So, Peter was teaching that **“the holy Scriptures” never came by the will of man, but holy men of GOD spoke as they were moved by the HOLY SPIRIT**. By willfully submitting to the HOLY SPIRIT, divinely selected men like Moses, Jeremiah, Peter, David, and Paul spoke and later wrote down their inspired contributions to the Holy Scriptures.

For this reason, while speaking of certain Psalms that referred to the future betrayal of JESUS by Judas Iscariot, Peter said: **“Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; “for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.” ... “For it is written in the Book of**

¹³ 1 John 4:1-3

¹⁴ Galatians 5:22-23

¹⁵ 2 Peter 1:21

Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it’; and, ‘Let another take his office.’”¹⁶

Peter directly attributes the words of the Psalms to the HOLY SPIRIT and indicates those words were spoken by the SPIRIT through **“the mouth of David”**. And when we consider how breath and speaking work together for all of us every day, and how the Greek word we translate as **“spirit”** can also be translated as **“air, wind, or breath”**, we can imagine how the HOLY SPIRIT **“spoke”** through the mouth of David.

The message had David’s voice, meaning it sounded like David, it fit with how David would express himself, and demonstrated his personality. But, because David had surrendered his heart, mind, soul, and strength to GOD, the HOLY SPIRIT could inspire him and speak through his mouth!

Likewise, the Book of Hebrews also attributes the words of the Bible to the HOLY SPIRIT, saying: Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: **“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.’ So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”¹⁷**

Because GOD’s people have long understood that the words of the Bible are literally the words of the HOLY SPIRIT spoken through divinely chosen human messengers, the Apostles, Prophets, and Disciples of the LORD (and even JESUS Himself) always considered the Scriptures to be **“the Word of GOD”** instead of **“the word of men”**!

Paul wrote: **For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.**¹⁸

The Bible’s divine inspiration is the reason the Apostles and Prophets of GOD called the Scriptures **“the Word of GOD”**! The letters Paul wrote for example, were physically written by Paul, and his personality and character still flavor the words we have received. Meanwhile, we must never forget those words were breathed out by the HOLY SPIRIT who moved Paul to write down the words given to him.

Peter confirmed Paul’s letters were Scripture when he wrote: **Consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to**

¹⁶ Acts 1:16-20

¹⁷ Hebrews 3:7-11

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 2:13

understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.¹⁹

Peter makes it clear that Paul's epistles flowed out of the wisdom he was given from the LORD. And for this reason, Peter testified that Paul's letters were to be classified as Scripture by warning against those who twisted Paul's letters just as they twisted **"the rest of the Scriptures"**.

Likewise, JESUS our LORD confirmed that the SPIRIT speaks through those who have received Him, when He explained: **"You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."**²⁰

And in another place, our LORD promised: **"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."**²¹

Beyond all doubt, the HOLY SPIRIT teaches and guides all who call JESUS their LORD much like how He taught and guided the Apostles, Prophets, and Disciples whom He chose to compile the Holy Scriptures. For this reason, John wrote: **The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.**²²

However, the key difference between you and I and GOD's chosen Apostles and Prophets is that the things **we** say and the words **we** write cannot be classified as "the Holy Scriptures"! No, that holy library of 66 inspired books was completed before the end of the first century by the men GOD hand-picked for the task. And it ends with a warning not to add anything to it or take anything away from it!

Identification to Canonization

Therefore, to understand the Bible properly, we must understand that GOD chose His Prophets²³, He chose His Apostles²⁴, He chose Elizabeth and Zacharias, and He chose Mary. These are just a few examples, but we can see that some people were chosen to become parents of one of the LORD's prophets. One woman was chosen to become the mother of our LORD. Other people were chosen to speak the Word of the LORD

¹⁹ 2 Peter 3:15-16

²⁰ Matthew 10:18-20

²¹ John 14:26

²² 1 John 2:27

²³ Jeremiah 1:5

²⁴ John 15:16

prophetically. Then others (whose names will be listed on the foundations of the New Jerusalem) were chosen to declare to the world the good news about JESUS.

Through His perfect foreknowledge, GOD can see who will love and serve Him faithfully, and who will not.²⁵ Then, out of those who will love and serve Him, GOD chose certain individuals and appointed the times and places where they would be born²⁶ so they could fulfill His divine purpose.

Thus, by GOD's selection and anointing passing down from person to person, He identified His chosen Prophets, His chosen Priests, His chosen Kings, His chosen Apostles, and His chosen Disciples. Therefore, GOD's identification of His chosen messengers (often accompanied by signs of His approval) demonstrated to many witnesses the inspiration of the people He had selected to speak His Words.

Consequently, those who lived during the times of such Apostles and Prophets recognized the anointing of GOD upon them and received the words they wrote down as the Word of GOD delivered to them by GOD's chosen messengers. In this way, GOD, who has always known which books were part of His Holy Scriptures, made sure His people could recognize the writings He inspired.

Meanwhile, a secondary way GOD's people can verify that He inspired a book or a messenger is when one or more of the LORD's anointed servants affirm the writings or identity of another one of His chosen messengers. Yes, when someone who has been anointed by GOD, such as an Apostle or a Prophet (or even JESUS Himself) quotes from any passage of holy Scripture as authoritative messages from GOD or identifies a fellow servant of the LORD by name, it is an absolute witness to the inspiration of the messenger they are referring to.

Regarding examples of identifying other inspired messengers, Matthew directly testifies that Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and David were inspired prophets in the pages of his gospel. Likewise, JESUS explicitly confirmed that Moses, John the Baptist, Isaiah, Daniel, Elisha, and Jonah were inspired prophets.

Likewise, by quoting the writings of other chosen messengers of GOD to settle disputes or establish unquestionable facts, JESUS and His Apostles confirmed the inspiration of many of the books of the Bible. For instance, JESUS quoted Exodus and Deuteronomy to rebuff satan's temptations during His 40 days in the wilderness. He quoted Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and the scribes over their man-made traditions that contradicted GOD's commandments. Also, JESUS quoted Genesis to correct the Pharisees on the issue of divorce.

²⁵ 1 Peter 1:2

²⁶ Acts 17:26

Meanwhile, no one that JESUS or His followers rebuked by quoting Scripture could withstand the authority of the Word of GOD. And this is how we must view the Bible; it is the ultimate authority on this earth until JESUS returns!

But we can see that the Bible is like a woven basket that employs each unbreakable strand to reinforce and support the others. Each book fits perfectly together with the remaining books to form a supernaturally cohesive message, and we call the complete library of books “**the Bible**”, an English word that comes from the Greek term “**biblia**” which means “**books**”.

Now we should explain that on certain occasions when something very new was happening in history, GOD demonstrated exactly who He chose to speak and write down His Word by performing certain signs through them. Those signs allowed the people to see that the messenger was truly speaking GOD’s Words. Therefore, the words written down by such messengers were easily and quickly received as holy Scripture.

We see this principle proved in passages like Exodus chapter 4, where GOD gives Moses two signs to demonstrate to the people that the LORD had sent him. Then, all the other signs and wonders GOD worked through Moses in Exodus continued to reveal that he most certainly was GOD’s chosen prophet.

Likewise, when Peter spoke to the crowds at Pentecost about JESUS, he said: “**Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know...**”²⁷

So, signs and wonders often helped confirm that GOD had anointed someone as a Prophet or an Apostle! And the teachings and writings of such anointed individuals were readily accepted as Holy Scripture. But signs and wonders were always to be a **secondary** witness to one much more important test of any messenger, and that test was one of consistency to the covenant.

For example, Moses wrote: “**If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**”²⁸

²⁷ Acts 2:22

²⁸ Deuteronomy 13:1-3

Thus, while GOD often used signs and wonders to bear witness to His messengers, He also warned that any messenger that turned His people away from obeying His commandments, regardless of the signs they displayed, was not speaking for Him.

So, GOD's affirmation of a messenger, often with signs or wonders, and a messenger's consistency with the commandments of the covenant were two ways the people of GOD have always recognized the inspired books of the Bible.

And a third witness that also helped GOD's people identify the books that He inspired beyond the two we have discussed so far was the test of broad acceptance among the faithful.

Like Matthew referring to the words of the Prophets or Peter categorizing Paul's letters with "the rest of the Scriptures", history records leaders in the churches the Apostles established quoting from the books they knew to be the Word of GOD in correspondence to one another. Thus, all these factors are involved in understanding what we call "the canon of Scripture".

Here we should mention that the English word "**canon**" is a transliteration of the Greek word "**kanōn**", which meant "**rule, code, standard, or measure**". And, in English, the term "**canon**" (spelled just like the camera company) means: "**a general law, rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged.**"

Meanwhile, the features that GOD built into each of the Books we know as the Bible to prove they are part of the canon of Scripture (which is the criterion by which all things are judged) have always existed within the text. The three main features of identification are: divine attestation of the writer or acceptance by those who have received divine attestation, consistency with previous revelations, and broad contemporaneous acceptance among the faithful.

For example, Matthew was an Apostle directly chosen by JESUS. So, the LORD's acceptance of Matthew as a witness proves his writings are inspired Scripture. Also, his fellow Apostles accepted his account as the Word of GOD, therefore all the churches accepted and widely distributed his gospel account as an inspired book of the Holy Bible.

Mark was a close associate of Peter, Paul, and the Jerusalem church, and he was directly acknowledged in their anointed writings. Also, the Apostles confirmed his account as the Word of GOD. Therefore, all the churches accepted and widely distributed his gospel account as an inspired book of the Holy Bible.

Luke was a close associate of Paul and Timothy, and he was directly acknowledged by them in their anointed writings. Likewise, the Apostles confirmed Luke's accounts as the Word of GOD. Therefore, all the churches accepted and widely distributed his historical accounts as inspired books of the Holy Bible.

John was an Apostle directly chosen by JESUS, plus his fellow Apostles accepted his writings as the Word of GOD. Therefore, all the churches accepted and widely distributed his gospel account, epistles, and prophetic revelation as inspired books of the Holy Bible.

In similar ways, each of the Final 27 Books of the Bible were contemporaneously confirmed by the Apostles and received by the churches as part of Holy Scripture, just as JESUS and the Apostles confirmed and approved of the First 39 Books that were written before the 12 were chosen by JESUS. So, we can really categorize the First 39 books as “the pre-Apostolic Scriptures” accepted and quoted by the LORD and His chosen Apostles, and the Final 27 Books as “the Apostolic Scriptures” written by the Apostles and those they trusted.

So, to those who wonder how we know that the 66 Books of our modern Bibles, and those books alone, are worthy of the title “The Word of GOD”, it is through their Apostolic acceptance as authoritative Scripture that we can be assured. They received those books as holy Scripture, and they taught the churches they founded to accept them and them alone, as well.

As the Prophet Isaiah wrote and the Apostle Peter later confirmed: **“The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.”**²⁹ Truly, in this world, we can only unconditionally trust *“all of the Bible, and the Bible alone”!*

Contradiction and Transmission

Earlier, we discussed how an ever-increasing number of people are rejecting the Bible as the foundation of their thinking. In the parable of the soils and the seed, JESUS revealed this is because the devil is snatching the life-brining **“seed”** away from their hearts with lies.³⁰

Due to the devil’s deceptions, instead of unconditionally trusting the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of GOD, the people who represent the first soil type adopt the perspective that the Bible contains errors, contradictions, or factual inaccuracies.

Some of those deceived people attempt to maintain some rudimentary association with the Bible by reinterpreting much of what it says in non-literal ways to fit their satanically inspired understanding of the world. But others dissolve their connection to the Bible completely and discard GOD’s Word from their lives.

We will deal with the demonic practice of reinterpreting the Bible to force it to adapt to fallen perspectives later, but at this time we need to dig deeper into the root problem

²⁹ 1 Peter 1:24b-25a

³⁰ Matthew 13:19

regarding why some people believe that the Bible contains errors, contradictions, or factual inaccuracies.

As we have learned, GOD Himself chose the men who wrote the Bible, the HOLY SPIRIT inspired them to write, and other inspired writers within Scripture confirm it was the HOLY SPIRIT speaking when GOD's Prophets wrote their contributions to the Bible.

Also, we have established that prophecy is defined as “**a divinely inspired communication**” and all Scripture is divinely inspired. So, we can label every person GOD inspired to write down His Holy Scriptures a “**Prophet**” because their words are literally GOD's Word. This includes Prophets like Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. It includes Apostles like Peter, Paul, and John. It includes Historians like Luke and Mark, and Elders like James and Jude. All of them can be referred to as “**Prophets**” because GOD chose them to communicate His inspired Word to the world.

Meanwhile, this rock-solid foundation should guarantee that there are no errors, contradictions, or factual inaccuracies in the Bible, and it does. Yes, when we know exactly what the Bible is (and is not), and how GOD has faithfully preserved His Word through the ages, then we can prove that there are no errors, contradictions, or factual inaccuracies in Its pages. However, such issues do occasionally appear to be present when we read modern *translations* of the Bible.

For example, within the New King James English translation of the Bible, in Acts chapter 7, they report that Stephen said: “**Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people.**”³¹

But in that exact same English translation, in Genesis chapter 47, it is written: **All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.**³²

Is Moses wrong? Was Stephen wrong? Did Luke misquote Stephen? Did Stephen misquote Moses? The answer to all these questions is “no”. Moses was not wrong, Stephen was not wrong, and Luke was not wrong. It is the New King James translation (and nearly every other popular translation) that is wrong. Translators and Bible scholars created this issue between these two passages; an issue that we call an “**apparent contradiction**”.

We call such examples “apparent contradictions” because they only appear to be contradictions until we look deeper into the original text of the inspired Word of GOD. But inevitably, when we dig deeper into such apparent contradictions and look closer at the Holy Scriptures, these little discrepancies lead us into a much deeper

³¹ Acts 7:14

³² Genesis 46:27b

understanding and appreciation for the Bible and how it has been transmitted to us over the ages.

You see, apparent contradictions in the Bible are created at some point *after* GOD's original hand-selected Prophets wrote down the words the HOLY SPIRIT inspired them to write. The original hand-written text was perfect, infallible, and 100% true and trustworthy. But when we pick up a modern English translation of the Bible, we are not holding in our hands the exact same documents that GOD's Prophets inscribed.

Those original prophet-written documents, which are called "**autographs**", were painstakingly hand-copied. Those amazingly accurate copies, which we call "**manuscripts**" were read and revered as GOD's Word within the churches. Also, those manuscripts were carefully hand-copied by other churches, so they could also have access to GOD's Word. Then, eventually, large manuscript collections were gathered and studiously hand-copied to be compiled into a book, which we call a "**codex**".

Those who study those ancient manuscripts and codices (the plural of codex) then look at the similarities between those early hand-written copies, note any differences, and classify them accordingly. Through their study of the many thousands of manuscripts and codices of the Final 27 Books of the Bible, they have found them all to be so amazingly similar, that based on some relatively minor differences (which we call "**textual variants**"), they can classify them into only two separate but very similar groups. One group is typically known as **the Critical Text**, and the other group is typically known as **the Majority Text**.

Next, we need to understand that some English translations use the Majority Text when they translate the Final 27 Books, while others use the Critical Text. So, when we compare two translations and find differences between the same verses, the issue is either one of textual variants between the Critical or Majority text, or differences in translation styles.

For example, the New King James translation version of Matthew 9:13b reads: "**For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.**"³³ But the New American Standard Bible reads: "**For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.**"³⁴ Please understand that the difference is not an issue of inspiration or the infallibility of the Word of GOD! No, it is an issue of human *transmission*.

Sadly, based on intensive study, we have concluded that the manuscripts classified as "the Critical Text" are not as complete as the manuscripts classified as "the Majority

³³ Matthew 9:13b NKJV

³⁴ Matthew 9:13b NASB

Text". This is the reason that we recommend translations that use the Majority Text as their basis of the Final 27 Books.

By the way, this means that the original, inspired reading of Matthew 9:13b should read: **"For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."**³⁵ And, in fact, this reading is confirmed word for word in Luke 5:32, because both Critical Text and Majority Text manuscripts provide that identical reading.

Verification of Translation

Such facts should have led scholars and Bible translation committees towards preference of the Majority Text, but sadly because they seem to be more concerned with the approval of fallible men than the approval of our infallible GOD, most of them chose the wrong path.

Meanwhile, this same type of human *transmission* error and the resulting textual variant is behind the example we read earlier, regarding Stephen's words, compared to the witness of Genesis.

As we have already discussed, when modern Bible translators choose a Greek textual basis for their translation of the Final 27 books, they have two choices: the Critical Text or the Majority Text. Similarly, when they choose a textual basis for their translations of the First 39 Books, they once more have at least two choices.

The basis most modern Bible translators have chosen is called the Masoretic Text, but the alternative they should have translated modern Bibles from is called the Septuagint. The Septuagint³⁶ is nearly 1000 years older than the Masoretic Text³⁷, which means it was produced much closer to the time of the original writings. But more importantly, nearly all scholars agree it was the Bible that JESUS and His Prophets quoted from as Holy Scripture.

Therefore, when we compare what Stephen said in Acts to what was written in Genesis in the Septuagint text, they both match each other! Acts 7:14 says 75 people³⁸ and Genesis 46:27³⁹ says 75 people. But this is not the only time the text of the Final 27 Books matches so perfectly with the Septuagint and does not match the Masoretic Text.

No, there are at least 340 clear examples like the one we just saw that confirm the Septuagint was the text the LORD and His Apostles and Prophets accepted as the holy

³⁵ Matthew 9:13b NKJV

³⁶ ~250 B.C.

³⁷ ~850 A.D.

³⁸ Then Joseph sent and summoned his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five people. Acts 7:14

³⁹ And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in the land of Egypt were nine persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt were seventy-five persons. Genesis 46:27

Scriptures. Due to this fact, many “apparent contradictions” disappear when we know the texts GOD has used to preserve His Word throughout the ages.

If we use a Septuagint-based translation of the First 39 Books of the Bible and a Majority Text based translation of the Final 27 Books, the next potential sources of apparent contradictions are **translation** or **interpretation**.

Also, once we accept the overwhelming evidence that JESUS and His Disciples considered the Greek Septuagint translation of the Scriptures the Word of GOD, and we accept the staggering internal evidence that the Majority Text preserves the inspired writings of GOD’s chosen Prophets, translation is simplified because it only involves the languages of koine Greek and modern English.

But even with that simplification, it can be very difficult to translate words from one language to another, especially when vast time periods and monumental cultural shifts have modified the way people understand those words. For this reason, translation is typically done by a committee.

For example, history records that approximately 250 years before JESUS was born in Bethlehem 72 Ancient Hebrew scholars who were also fluent in Greek translated the Septuagint from the Hebrew manuscripts.

Likewise, most modern Bible translations were completed by committees made up of highly trained experts in language. But each of those committees, including the Septuagint translators, adopt what we might call a “*philosophy of interpretation*”.

Those philosophies can be broken down into just three simple categories, and they are “word for word”, “thought for thought”, or “paraphrase”. A strict, literal “word for word” philosophy of interpretation is typically never adopted by modern Bible translation committees, because they believe that it makes the translation too difficult to understand for the modern reader. For this reason, most literal “word for word” translations tend to be the work of just one person.

A slightly less literal hybridization of the “word for word” and the “thought for thought” philosophies of interpretation has been adopted by most conservative translation committees, and they feel that they are keeping their translation readable without straying far from the original meaning of the Prophets.

While a much less literal hybrid of the “thought for thought” and “paraphrase” philosophy of interpretation is the method commonly selected by more liberal translation committees and individuals.

But finally, some so-called “translations” stray deep into the realm of “paraphrase” and far from the original words of the Prophets. Thus, they often twist the Bible’s message to suit the sinful tendencies of the translator(s).

Meanwhile, if scholars would have recognized the respect JESUS and His Prophets showed to the Septuagint, they would have noted that the Septuagint was a very literal “word for word” translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, except when the name of GOD was used.

Notably, in passages that contain the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) - out of profound reverence for GOD – the Septuagint translators wrote out such passages with the Greek words “**ho koo'-ree-os**” meaning “**The LORD**”.

Thus, when JESUS or His Prophets quote passages that contain the Tetragrammaton, they always quote the Septuagint that uses the Greek equivalent of “**the LORD**”, and this is yet one more fact that reveals the fact that they considered the Septuagint to be the Word of GOD.

Meanwhile, the obvious choice of the Septuagint translators to follow the “word for word” philosophy of translation proves, we should seek out word-for-word translations of the Bible whenever possible, and it should be the translation style we prefer.

After all, JESUS said: “**It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’**”⁴⁰ And the only way to transmit “**every word**” GOD has spoken through His Prophets down through the ages into every language is to translate “word for word”.

One great modern English translation that uses the correct manuscripts⁴¹ and a word for word style of interpretation is the Apostolic Bible Polyglot. Charles VanderPool did an outstanding job on his translation, and we recommend his ABP translation as one of the best resources available to know GOD’s Word as the LORD intended.

One challenge with the ABP translation is that the original Greek word order has not been changed, and the English language places words in sentences in very different places than ancient Greek placed them. So, there are numbers included in the ABP to help the reader rearrange the words into the proper English reading order. This can make long-term reading of the translation difficult.

Another translation/edition that was also based on the correct manuscripts that falls somewhere between a “word for word” or “thought for thought” style of interpretation was completed by Paul Esposito. He edited existing Septuagint translations and Majority Text translations to produce his work. Then he published it under the names “Compete Apostles Bible” (CAB) or “The Logos Bible”.

One day, if the LORD’s return does occur first, it would be wonderful for a committee of scholars to embark on a literal, “word for word”, Septuagint-styled translation of

⁴⁰ Matthew 4:4

⁴¹ Septuagint and Majority Text

Septuagint and Majority Text manuscripts for the English-speaking world. But until that time, we are grateful for works like the ABP and the CAB translations.

Meanwhile, now that we understand that many other modern translations have abandoned the texts and translation styles the Prophets of the LORD endorsed by quoting from the Septuagint, we can see why sometimes there appear to be contradictions in modern translations.

By not carefully holding fast to the manuscripts the Prophets endorsed and the translation style those manuscripts demonstrated, modern translators began a process that would inevitably lead to people finding small issues within modern English translations of the Bible.

Nevertheless, the Bible is not like the telephone game! In the telephone game, one person tells another person a secret. That person tells the next person, and they tell the next in line. Eventually, someone in the chain of custody of the secret either accidentally or intentionally modifies the secret, and the person at the end of the chain hears something that does not match up with the original secret.

The Bible is not like this. As we mentioned, JESUS and His Prophets confirmed the Septuagint manuscripts, and we still have many of the manuscripts they would have recognized as GOD's Word. Therefore, we can still read the ancient Greek manuscripts they would have recognized as the Bible, and we can translate them directly into English, eliminating any deviations from the original message.

Likewise, we still have many thousands of very early ancient manuscripts that record what the Prophets wrote in the Final 27 Books of the Bible. And we can directly translate those Majority texts into English, and eliminate any deviations from the original message. So, the only thing that can theoretically stand in our way at this point is ignorance of the Greek language.

To solve this problem, we have lexicons, concordances, and scholarly dictionaries that explain even the smallest nuances of every Greek word used in the Scriptures. So, we can access GOD's Word through literal "word for word" translations of the Septuagint and Majority Texts, plus we can verify the translation of every word of those works with freely available tools, such as the software downloadable at theword.net. Thus, with these readily available tools, sound reasoning skills, and the HOLY SPIRIT's guidance, we can answer all remaining *apparent* contradictions.

Now, for an example of an apparent contradiction caused by errors in translation, we can compare First John 1:8-10 and First John 3:9 in a popular modern translation, such as the New King James version.

In that translation, one passage reads: **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that**

we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.⁴² But the other states: **Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.**⁴³

A false teacher with a personal agenda might choose one mistranslated passage over the other to prove some misguided point. A skeptic pits these two verses against one another to claim there are contradictions in the Bible. But the sound-minded Christian investigates how apparent contradictions have been transmitted, translated, and interpreted, to discover the complimentary messages John was originally conveying in his inspired letter.

By visiting biblehub.com, selecting “1 John 3”, “1 John 3:9”, and “Text Analysis” from the top drop-down menus, the sound-minded Christian will end up at a page⁴⁴ that breaks down each Greek word of the verse, literally translates each word, and provides valuable technical data that explains the tenses and moods of the words established by the precise way John wrote them.

Here we see Strong’s number 4160 translated as “**practices**”, written as a present, indicative, active verb. And we note it was not properly translated within the New King James translation. Where they wrote “**does not sin**”, John wrote the equivalent of “**does not practice sin**”.

⁴² 1 John 1:8-10

⁴³ 1 John 3:9

⁴⁴ https://biblehub.com/text/1_john/3-9.htm

1 John		3:9		Bible	
	Theou				
266 [e]	ἁμαρτίαν hamartian	sin		N-AFS	
3756 [e]	οὐ ou	not		Adv	
4160 [e]	ποιεῖ, poiei	practices,		V-PIA-3S	Verb - Present Indicative Active - 3rd Person Singular
3754 [e]	ὅτι hoti	because		Conj	
4690 [e]	σπέρμα sperma	seed		N-NNS	
846 [e]	αὐτοῦ autou	of Him		PPro-GM3S	
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in		Prep	
	αὐτοῦ	him		PPro-DM3S	

Likewise, we find Strong's number 264, the verb form of the word sin. But we see that John wrote it as a present, infinitive, active form of the verb, which should be translated as **“to continue sinning”** or **“keep on sinning”**.

1 John		3:9		Bible	
3756 [e]	οὐ ou	not		Adv	
1410 [e]	δύναται dynatai	he is able		V-PIM/P-3S	
264 [e]	ἁμαρτάνειν, hamartanein	to continue sinning,		V-PNA	Verb - Present Infinitive Active
3754 [e]	ὅτι hoti	because		Conj	
1537 [e]	ἐκ ek	of		Prep	
3588 [e]	τοῦ tou	-		Art-GMS	
2316 [e]	Θεοῦ Theou	God		N-GMS	
1080 [e]	γεγέννηται. gegennētai	he has been born.		V-RIM/P-3S	

For these reasons, the English Standard Version translates the passage: **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.**⁴⁵

This translation helps us understand that John used precise versions of each word that indicate it is possible for a born-again person to sin, but if they are truly born again, they will not **“make a practice of sinning”** or **“keep on sinning”**.

Also, by examining the verb tenses in first John 1:8-10, we can see that John used the past tense verb for sin, so the translators used the ending **“ed”** and wrote: **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**⁴⁶

John was simply writing in his own way, what Paul said in Romans. Namely: **“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of GOD.”**⁴⁷ Anyone who can look at the mirror of GOD’s law and not see that they have sinned by violating His commandments at some point in their life is self-deceived, and they have not yet received the truth of GOD’s Word into themselves.

But once we accept the truth declared by the perfect Law of GOD and recognize our sin by confessing it, GOD is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. But those who claim they have not sinned, claim the Word of GOD is wrong in Romans 3:23, proving they have not yet received the seed of GOD’s Word into their hearts.

And once we truly receive the seed of GOD’s Word into our hearts, we will not **“make a practice of sinning”**, because His Word teaches us the wages of sin is death. Thus, those who truly believe that fact cannot **“keep on sinning”**, because they have allowed the Word that they have placed their trust in to transform them into born-again saints, filled with the HOLY SPIRIT.

Yes, the various supposed contradictions that skeptics and heretics try to use to destroy the faith of Christians can easily be resolved by understanding how the Bible has been transmitted, translated, and interpreted over the years. And this leads us to the final problem that generates the apparent contradictions that skeptics and heretics use to accomplish the devil’s will.

Subjugation of Interpretation

⁴⁵ 1 John 3:9 ESV

⁴⁶ 1 John 1:8-10

⁴⁷ Romans 3:23

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word “**interpretation**” means: “**an explanation or opinion of what something means**”.⁴⁸ And the fact is, even after we resolve human errors in the *transmission* and *translation* of the Bible, we still face human errors of *interpretation*.

One person can look at a black cat and think it means something superstitious. While another person can see the black cat as just another one of GOD’s beautiful creations. The cat remains the same, but the worldview of the interpreter shapes the way the cat is interpreted.

Similarly, one person can look at a broken mirror and think it means something superstitious. But another person can see the broken mirror as the result of an accident or carelessness, instead of an omen or warning.

People with unbiblical worldviews, such as a superstitious worldview, don’t interpret the things they see, hear, or read in the same way as people with a biblical worldview. Superstitious people see all things through the lens of a pagan worldview, and to them, many everyday things are omens or predictions.

Do you remember the expression “rose-colored glasses”? That expression refers to someone who metaphorically wears tinted glasses that distort reality so that they see everything in a “rosy” or optimistic way. Similarly, any distortion in the worldview of an interpreter leads to distorted interpretations of the Bible. Therefore, this leads us to the word “**subjugation**”.

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines “**subjugation**” as: “**to bring under control and governance as a subject**”, or “**to make submissive**”. And they explain: “**In Latin, subjugate means literally ‘bring under the yoke’**”.⁴⁹ Truly, there are two types of people when it comes to the reading of the Bible: those who fully submit to it as the authoritative Word of GOD, and those who don’t.

Those who do submit to the Bible recognize that it is above them, it is always true, and it is always right. So, after they verify transmission and translation, they adapt their interpretations to achieve two key principles that we can say represent the two sides of the yoke of subjection. The first principle is contextualization and the second is harmonization.

Obviously, the root of the word **contextualization** is **context**. And the word context means: “**the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning**”⁵⁰ So, this foundational principle of submissive Bible

⁴⁸ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/interpretation>

⁴⁹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/subjugate>

⁵⁰ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/context>

interpretation means that we must always keep the surroundings of every passage in mind as we seek to discover its inspired meaning.

What inspired words surround the passage? How do those words help us understand what the inspired Prophet was saying to his audience? Who was the original audience? What historical context can help us understand the Prophet's inspired message? These key questions help us avoid twisting the meaning of passages.

But those who do not submit to the authority of Scripture frequently **decontextualize** passages so they can turn literal passages into allegory, or apply passages to issues the inspired Prophet was not addressing. In this way, such false teachers try to place the Word of GOD "under the yoke", bringing Scripture into subjugation to their own fleshly desires and perspectives.

Meanwhile, Scripture admonishes: **We have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?**⁵¹

Sadly, those who refuse to be in subjection to GOD tend to view the Bible as a tool they can use to satisfy their own ego, so they preach their own private interpretations of passages to sound unique, intelligent, or sophisticated to sell books, generate followers, or to justify their own warped, unbiblical worldview.

For this reason, Peter wrote: **...no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**⁵²

Peter's point is that each inspired writer of holy Scriptures had a specific original meaning in mind when they wrote their holy texts, and we must find and submit to their original, inspired meaning. We are not free to develop private interpretations of their holy words, because that would mean we are not submitting to the words GOD inspired through His holy Prophets!

But sometimes, to understand the original inspired meaning of a passage, we need more than just the words that surround it or even the history behind it. Sometimes we need another tool to make sure we are not creating our own "**private interpretation**". And this leads us to the other side of the yoke of subjection, which is **harmonization**.

As GOD has said: **"By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established."**⁵³ When two or more witnesses agree about the facts, their testimonies "harmonize" because to harmonize means "to be in agreement".

⁵¹ Hebrews 12:9

⁵² 2 Peter 1:20-21

⁵³ Deuteronomy 19:15b

So, *harmonization* in Bible interpretation means that we gather passages together that discuss the topic at hand (or use similar language) to find the interpretation that agrees with the original inspired messages of all the other relevant passages.

If we think we might have the proper original meaning of a passage in the Bible, but we find our interpretation conflicting with the proper original meaning of another related passage of Scripture, the problem is our interpretation!

Therefore, when we study the Bible, we need to make sure to harmonize our understanding of every text with the original inspired meaning of all the other relevant texts in the Bible.

Undoubtedly, this means that we must become very knowledgeable in the Scriptures to make sound interpretations that harmonize the entire Bible together as a whole. And this is why we must study the Bible carefully and continuously to **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”**⁵⁴

Hebrews explains: **For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**⁵⁵

There is a reason churches don't ask newly born-again Christians to lead congregational Bible studies! Even those of us who have been studying the Scriptures for many decades have plenty more to learn. But as we **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD”**, we become more and more **“skilled in the word of righteousness”**. Then, it becomes easier to *spot* when something is off, to *prove* that it is off, and to *correct* it with sound Biblical teaching.

So, Paul writes **[A church overseer must be] “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped...”**⁵⁶

Only by holding fast to the faithful word can an overseer in GOD's church correct those who stray from the truth. And they do this by correcting errors in *harmonization* and *contextualization*. Thus, in this way, they lead GOD's flock into *subjugation* to the absolute authority of Scripture. Now with the tools of harmonization and

⁵⁴ 2 Peter 3:18

⁵⁵ Hebrews 5:13-14

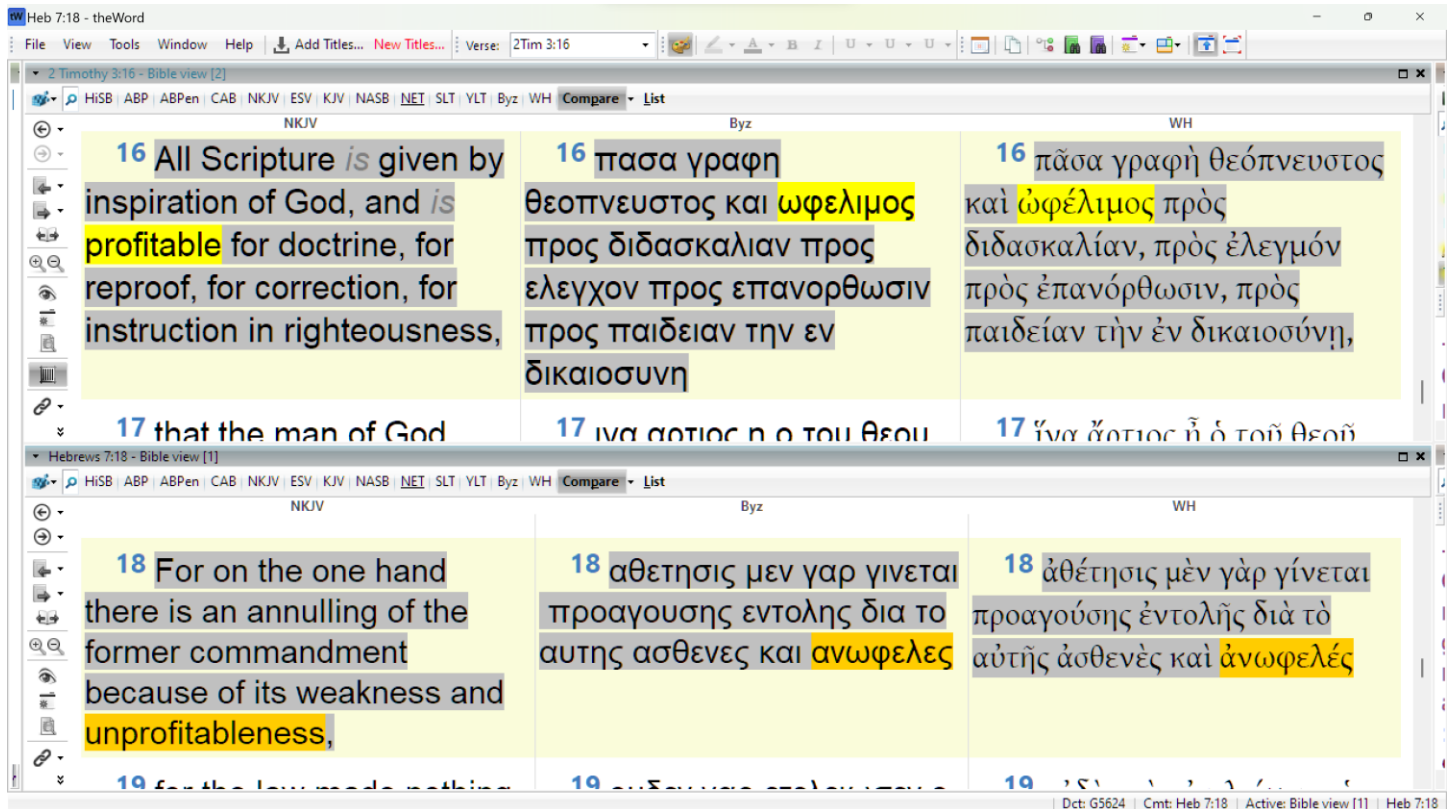
⁵⁶ Titus 1:9-11

contextualization in hand, we can consider an example of the final cause of “apparent contradictions”.

In Second Timothy 3:16, Paul wrote: **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...”**⁵⁷. But in Hebrews 7:18, it is written: **“For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness...”**⁵⁸.

Some see this as a contradiction, and they ask: Is **“all Scripture...profitable”**, or was one commandment contained in Scripture **“unprofitable”**?

First, we can compare the Critical Text manuscripts and the Majority Text manuscripts to see if this is an issue of transmission. And when we do this, we find it is not. The text is the same in both the Critical Text and Majority Text manuscripts.



Next, we can see if the issue is a problem created by translation. For instance, is there a verifiable linguistic relationship between the word used in Second Timothy 3:16 and the word used in Hebrews 7:18?

Well, once again we see that this is not an issue of translation, since Strong's number G5624 is the word used in Paul's letter to Timothy and it is the root of the word used in

⁵⁷ 2 Timothy 3:16

⁵⁸ Hebrews 7:18

Hebrews. Also, we see the translation into English is precise and correct. So, this apparent contradiction is not caused by a translation issue.

This leaves us with *interpretation* as the culprit for the creation of this apparent contradiction, and we must use the tools of contextualization and harmonization to solve this particular puzzle. So, let's look first at the context of the passage in Second Timothy.

Paul wrote that all Scripture was “**profitable for doctrine, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**”. The word “for” is a preposition, and it means we must link together the word “profitable” with all the nouns that follow the preposition “for” in the sentence.

Scripture is profitable “for doctrine”, meaning “teaching” in general.

Scripture is profitable “for reproof”, meaning “proving something to be true or false”.

Scripture is profitable “for correction”, meaning “standing up what has fallen down”.

And Scripture is profitable “for instruction in righteousness”, meaning “training Christians to live in a way that is acceptable to GOD”.

Paul did not say that all Scripture is profitable for all things, only the specific things he listed. For example, Scripture is not profitable for teaching us the recipe for cake. Also, Scripture is not profitable for teaching us how to fly an airplane.

So, we must include the specific prepositional phrases Paul used in context with the phrase “**all Scripture is profitable**”. And that is the first error in the skeptic's question.

But now, let us consider the context of the passage in Hebrews to see the next error the skeptic has made.

In context, the “**annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness**” in verse 18, is clearly referring to the commandment that established the descendants of Levi as the only tribe that could serve as priests⁵⁹ or minister in the Tabernacle⁶⁰.

For this reason, it is written: **If perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.**⁶¹

And later, Hebrews explains: **There were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.**⁶²

So, the “**weakness**” verse 18 speaks of is the fact that the Levitical priests died. The “**fleshly commandment**” mentioned in verse 16 is a reference to the fact that the Levitical priests were appointed according to their fleshly birth. And the “**unprofitableness**” of that “**fleshly commandment**” had to do with the fact that those fleshly priests could “**make nothing perfect**”. So, JESUS came as a far better Priest, He presented a far better sacrifice, and He can provide a far better cleansing!

But because he was not from the tribe of Levi, there clearly was an annulment of the requirement for all priests to descend from the lineage of Aaron who was of the tribe of Levi! And the entire passage revolves around Psalm 110, where GOD said: **The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”**⁶³

So, while the Scriptures that established the Levitical priesthood are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, they could not provide us

⁵⁹ Exodus 28:1, Numbers 26:59

⁶⁰ Numbers 1:50

⁶¹ Hebrews 7:11-16

⁶² Hebrews 7:23-24

⁶³ Psalms 110:4

with eternal salvation! Therefore, “...there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”⁶⁴

Consequently, by studying these passages within the written contexts they were originally delivered in, and by harmonizing them with the rest of the Scriptures we see there is no contradiction at all!

Brothers and Sisters, together we have tasted and seen: **As for God, His way is perfect; Yes, the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.**⁶⁵ So, in regards to what we unconditionally trust to guide us in this life, let us forever hold fast to all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

Intention and Repetition

As we noted earlier, the noun “**interpretation**” means “**an explanation or opinion of what something means**”. But the Cambridge Dictionary is much more precise when it defines the root of that word, which is verb “**interpret**”.

They accurately defined the verb “**interpret**” as: “**to decide what the intended meaning of something is**”⁶⁶. And the reason this definition is significantly better than their definition of the word “**interpretation**” is because it includes the words “**intended meaning**”.

You see, the word “**intend**” means: “**to have as a plan or purpose**”⁶⁷, and when it comes to interactions between beings that are capable of “**planning or having a purpose**”, interpretation must always consider the original “**intent**” of the source.

Now the term “**origin**” means “**the beginning or cause of something**”⁶⁸, and when it comes to the words and deeds of beings that are capable of planning or having a purpose, we must consider **the intent of the source** to arrive at a sound interpretation.

This means that the proper definition of “**interpret**” should include the word “**original**”, and it should read: “**to decide what the original intended meaning of something is**”. In this way, interpretation must always center on the intentions of the source, not the intentions of the interpreter.

Meanwhile, one fundamental way an interpreter can make sure to recognize the intentions of the source is by noting any repetition in actions, phrases, concepts, or words.

As an example of how we interpret **non-verbal interactions**, if you are feeding an animal food from your hand and it bites your finger, you can determine based on

⁶⁴ Hebrews 7:19

⁶⁵ 2 Samuel 22:31

⁶⁶ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/interpret>

⁶⁷ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intend>

⁶⁸ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/origin>

observations of the animal's past or future behavior if the animal "**intended**" to bite you or if it was an unintentional accident. Truly, if **repetition** was involved with the biting, you can logically deduce the **intention** of the animal.

Yes, **repetition** is the logical connection between the words "**tend**" and "**intend**". Therefore, the Cambridge Dictionary defines the word "**tend**" as: "**to be likely to behave in a particular way or have a particular characteristic**".

And GOD used an equivalent of the word "**tend**" when He commanded: "**If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.**"⁶⁹

Because the ox was **repeating** a behavior it had displayed in the past, the owner was responsible for **interpreting** that **tendency** of the creature as proof of **intent** and taking appropriate steps to prevent the ox from injuring or killing people.

Similarly, when **interpreting** verbal interactions, such as the written communications contained in the Bible, **repetition** helps us logically deduce the **intentions** of the writer and the HOLY SPIRIT who inspired them.

For example, in First Corinthians chapter 15, Paul repeats the word "**resurrection**" four times, he lists the witnesses who saw JESUS risen from the grave, and he uses the Greek word for "**risen**" in the context of resurrection 18 times. So, Paul's **repetition** of that theme viewed in the context of the chapter helps us understand Paul's **intentions**, so we can interpret his inspired message correctly.

Yes, in both verbal and non-verbal interactions, we must consider "**repetition**" to practice sound methods of **interpretation**, because "**repetition**" is one of the best methods available to prove "**intent**".

Imagine a prosecutor trying to prove person A was attempting to murder person B. If they could demonstrate a pattern of person A making **repeated** attempts against the life of person B, it would prove **intent** beyond a reasonable doubt.

Similarly, if you knew someone we will call "Person A" who presented a single false accusation against someone we will call "Person B", we would not presume to know the **intent** of Person A. But if they falsely accuse person B many times, it becomes easy to see the **intentions** of Person A. In this way, **repetition** helps an interpreter arrive a sound conclusion of the **intentions** of source of any communication.

⁶⁹ Exodus 21:28-29

So, to apply the principle of **repetition establishing original intent** to the interpretation of the Bible, we must consider what the most repeated concept in all the Bible might be. Is it GOD's love? It is belief in JESUS? Or is it that there are serious consequences for disobeying GOD's Commandments, but GOD is merciful and ready to forgive all those who are willing to repent of violating His Commandments, even to the point of sending His own Son as a sacrifice to redeem all those who will repent.

If the third proposition is true, we should expect to see GOD and His Prophets **repeatedly** reinforce His Commandments in the holy Scriptures. We should **repeatedly** see GOD evaluate nations, kings, and ordinary people based on their responses to His Laws. We should **consistently** see GOD and His Prophets urging people to repent of their sins against His Rules, and in all but perhaps a handful of books, this pattern should be found.

Well, in the first book of the Bible, called Genesis GOD said: **“I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”**⁷⁰

In Exodus, GOD said: **“I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”**⁷¹

In Leviticus, GOD said: **“Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD.”**⁷²

In Numbers, GOD said: **“The person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.”**⁷³

In Deuteronomy, it is written **“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”**⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Genesis 26:4-5

⁷¹ Exodus 20:5-6

⁷² Leviticus 22:31

⁷³ Numbers 15:30-31

⁷⁴ Deuteronomy 10:12-13

In Joshua, it is written: **“But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”**⁷⁵

In Judges, it is written: **“...They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. ...They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel...”**⁷⁶

In First Samuel, it is written: **“If you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.”**⁷⁷

In Second Samuel, it is written: **‘Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight?’**⁷⁸ **“Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.”**⁷⁹

In First Kings, it is written: **“Keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.”**⁸⁰

In Second Kings, it is written: **“The LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.”**⁸¹

In First Chronicles, it is written: **“Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.”**⁸²

In Second Chronicles, it is written: **Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you**

⁷⁵ Joshua 22:5

⁷⁶ Judges 2:17-20

⁷⁷ 1 Samuel 12:15

⁷⁸ 2 Samuel 12:9

⁷⁹ 2 Samuel 12:10

⁸⁰ 1 Kings 2:3

⁸¹ 2 Kings 17:13

⁸² 1 Chronicles 28:7

cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’ ”⁸³

In Ezra, it is written: **“Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.”⁸⁴**

In Nehemiah, it is written: **“You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments. You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Your servant.”⁸⁵**

In Job, it is written: **“I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”⁸⁶**

In the Psalms, it is written: **The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.⁸⁷**

In Proverbs, it is written: **He who despises the word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.⁸⁸**

In Ecclesiastes, it is written: **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.⁸⁹**

In Isaiah, it is written: **Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.⁹⁰**

In Jeremiah, it is written: **“This is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ Yet they did not obey or**

⁸³ 2 Chronicles 24:20

⁸⁴ Ezra 10:3

⁸⁵ Nehemiah 9:13-14

⁸⁶ Job 23:12

⁸⁷ Psalms 19:7-9

⁸⁸ Proverbs 13:13

⁸⁹ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

⁹⁰ Isaiah 48:18

incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.”⁹¹

In Lamentations, it is written: **“The LORD is righteous, for I rebelled against His commandment. Hear now, all peoples, and behold my sorrow; my virgins and my young men Have gone into captivity.”⁹²**

In Ezekiel, it is written: **I will give them another heart, and will put a new spirit within them; and will root out the heart of stone from their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in My commandments, and keep My ordinances, and do them: and they shall be to Me a people, and I will be their God.⁹³**

In Daniel, it is written: **“I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, “we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. “Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.”⁹⁴**

In Hosea, it is written: **“Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law.”⁹⁵**

In Amos, it is written: **“Thus says the LORD: ‘For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies lead them astray, lies which their fathers followed.’”⁹⁶**

In Micah, it is written: **“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”⁹⁷**

⁹¹ Jeremiah 7:23-24

⁹² Lamentations 1:18

⁹³ Ezekiel 11:19-20

⁹⁴ Daniel 9:4-6

⁹⁵ Hosea 8:1

⁹⁶ Amos 2:4

⁹⁷ Micah 4:1-2

In Zephaniah, it is written: **“Her prophets are insolent, treacherous people; Her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The LORD is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame.”**⁹⁸

In Haggai, it is written: **“All the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD.”**⁹⁹

In Zechariah, it is written: **“They refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.”**¹⁰⁰

In Malachi, it is written: **“The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, and turned many away from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ Says the LORD of hosts.”**¹⁰¹

In Matthew, JESUS said: **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fill to the full. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one letter nor one stroke of a letter will by any means pass from the law till all comes to pass. Whoever therefore loosens one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”**¹⁰²

In Mark, JESUS said: **“Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ “But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’**

⁹⁸ Zephaniah 3:4-5

⁹⁹ Haggai 1:12

¹⁰⁰ Zechariah 7:8-12

¹⁰¹ Malachi 2:6-8

¹⁰² Matthew 5:17-19

(that is, a gift to God), “then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, “making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”¹⁰³

In Luke, JESUS said: “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fall.”¹⁰⁴

In John, JESUS said: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”¹⁰⁵

In Acts, Paul said: “This I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”¹⁰⁶

In Romans, Paul wrote: “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”¹⁰⁷

In First Corinthians, it is written: “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”¹⁰⁸

In Second Corinthians, it is written: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?”¹⁰⁹

In Galatians, it is written: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”¹¹⁰

In Ephesians, it is written: “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of

¹⁰³ Mark 7:6-13

¹⁰⁴ Luke 16:17

¹⁰⁵ John 15:10

¹⁰⁶ Acts 24:14-16

¹⁰⁷ Romans 7:12

¹⁰⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:19

¹⁰⁹ 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

¹¹⁰ Galatians 5:19-21

thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.”¹¹¹

In Philippians, it is written: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”¹¹²

In Colossians, it is written: “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”¹¹³

In First Thessalonians, it is written: “Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁴

In Second Thessalonians, it is written: “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”¹¹⁵

In First Timothy, it is written: “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we

¹¹¹ Ephesians 5:3-7

¹¹² Philippians 2:12

¹¹³ Colossians 3:5-7

¹¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

¹¹⁵ 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”¹¹⁶

In Second Timothy, it is written: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”¹¹⁷

In Titus, it is written: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”¹¹⁸

In Hebrews, it is written: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”¹¹⁹

In James, it is written: “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ 1 Timothy 1:5-10

¹¹⁷ 2 Timothy 3:1-5

¹¹⁸ Titus 2:11-14

¹¹⁹ Hebrews 8:8-10

¹²⁰ James 2:8-12

In First Peter, it is written: **[Be] “obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”**¹²¹

In Second Peter, it is written: **“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.”**¹²²

In First John, it is written: **“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”**¹²³

In Second John, it is written: **“I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.”**¹²⁴

In Third John, it is written: **“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.”**¹²⁵

In Jude, it is written: **“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”**¹²⁶

And in Revelation, it is written: **“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”**¹²⁷

Yes, these verses (and many, many more) reinforce the commandments of GOD and warn against disobeying them, therefore, they reveal the most prevalent thread in all

¹²¹ 1 Peter 1:14-17

¹²² 2 Peter 2:20-21

¹²³ 1 John 2:3-4

¹²⁴ 2 John 1:4-6

¹²⁵ 3 John 1:11

¹²⁶ Jude 1:14-15

¹²⁷ Revelation 22:14-15

the Bible! The 9 books we did not cite don't contradict the fact that mankind must obey GOD's Commandments, they simply don't deal directly with the subject.

For example, Jonah was sent to Ninevah to warn them to repent of their sins, but because the content of his message was not included, we did not cite a passage from that book.

Likewise, even though Joel is dealing with how GOD will judge sinners who disobey His Commandments on the Day of the LORD, it does not directly mention the Commandments in that book.

But I hope we can all see that the most consistent thread in all the Bible is that GOD's Commandments are good, and mankind must obey them to avoid the righteous judgment of GOD!

It is true that the blood of the covenant changed from the blood of bulls and goats to the blood of JESUS our Savior.¹²⁸ Also, the priesthood changed from the Levitical priesthood of Aaron to the Melchizedek priesthood of JESUS.¹²⁹ But the Commandments of the Covenant did not change¹³⁰, and anyone who claims they did is a dangerous false teacher that you should avoid entirely!

So, the foundation of all Biblical interpretation is this: **“The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”**¹³¹ But that last word, which translators rendered into English as **“iniquity”**, is better translated: **“unrighteousness”** or more specifically **“deeds that violate the law”**.¹³²

Every Prophet sent by GOD, and even JESUS Himself, made it clear that turning from deeds that violate the law is the foundation of the Biblical message! For example, JESUS said: **“If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.”**¹³³

GOD and His Prophets tend to repeat that concept in various ways, at various times, and with various words! But the warning that mankind must turn away from sin is repeated so frequently that the Bible's primary message can be summed up in one single word; and that word is: **“Repent”!**¹³⁴

¹²⁸ Hebrews 9:13-14

¹²⁹ Hebrews 7:7-28

¹³⁰ 1 John 2:3-7

¹³¹ 2 Timothy 2:19

¹³² <https://biblehub.com/thayers/93.htm>

¹³³ Matthew 18:8-9

¹³⁴

Sometimes, GOD sent His Prophets to warn the people to repent of their sins and obey the Commandments of the Covenant, but eventually He sent His only begotten Son. Meanwhile, the message did not change, only the Messenger and the blood that cleanses all those who repent and turn to GOD in obedience!

But many false teachers don't like this fact. So, they twist the Bible and make counter-factual claims about its inspired message. For example, some claim that the Bible is a love letter to mankind.

They ignore the fact that JESUS said: **“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.”**¹³⁵ Similarly, they ignore the many passages that record GOD pouring out His wrath on those who reject His Commandments.

JESUS did not preach a message of universal love and acceptance! No, after presenting the parable of the wheat and the tares, He taught: **“He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**¹³⁶

The LORD sees the world like a field filled with two types of plants. The righteous are the plants that grew from good seed, which is His Word. They are called **“the sons of the kingdom”** and the children of GOD. But the those who practice lawlessness are the plants that grew from the evil seeds sowed by the devil, so they are called **“the sons of the wicked one”**. And all **“those who practice lawlessness”** will be thrown into the fire at the end of the age, when JESUS returns.

GOD does not desire that anyone perish¹³⁷, but that does not mean the Bible is a message of universal love and acceptance. No, the Scriptures explain: Those whom GOD loves, He **“rebukes and chastens, therefore be zealous and repent!”**¹³⁸

For this reason, the foundation of all Biblical interpretation must be consistency with the Commandments of the Covenant. If anyone contradicts the words GOD wrote with

¹³⁵ John 15:10

¹³⁶ Matthew 13:37-43

¹³⁷ The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

¹³⁸ “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” Revelation 3:19

His own finger in stone on the two tablets of the Testimony, they are blind leaders of the blind, and all who follow them will end up in hell.

As JESUS said in Matthew 19: **“If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”**¹³⁹, and nothing in the Bible every contradicts that message! But this is self-evident to all of us who hold fast to all of the Bible and the Bible alone.

Prevention of Deception

Imagine a world without deception. What if Eve refused to hear the father of lies, that subtle serpent in the garden? Picture how your life would be different if no one ever listened to those who contradict GOD’s Word or twist the text of the Holy Bible.

Can you fathom how different the world would be if everyone knew the truth, believed the truth, and obeyed the truth? What if the entire world worshipped only their Creator just as He has instructed, and all false gods and their demonic religions were banished?

What would a world that universally agreed with GOD’s Commandments be like? Would cars or homes need keys? Would law enforcement still need to be armed? Would we still require law enforcement? Would wars cease all around the world? Is deception the *only* problem keeping us back from such a world? Why is deception so effective?

To begin to answer these questions, please note: in the book of James it is written: **Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.** ¹⁴⁰

In this passage, we see that the root cause of conflict is: ***competing desires for selfish pleasure***. Person (or group) A covets what person (or group) B has, and conflict is born. Person A could have just been happy for person B. They could have looked at the situation from a loving perspective. But when person A chose the perspective of selfish desire, conflict becomes inevitable.

Meanwhile, those same selfish desires are what makes person or group A susceptible to deception. Their internal desires make them gravitate towards a message they **want** to hear, and they choose what they believe based on their **wants** instead of their needs. Because of selfish desires, their ears itch to hear a message that justifies them sinning to obtain whatever it is that they love more than GOD.

¹³⁹ Matthew 19:17b

¹⁴⁰ James 4:1-3

For this reason, James wrote: **Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”;** for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. **But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**¹⁴¹

GOD cannot be tempted by evil because He does not entertain selfish desires that contradict His Commandments! Therefore, the Christian life should be characterized by us dying to selfish desire to be more like JESUS. This not only leads us away from sin, it also sets us free from the deception we formerly embraced to justify our sin.

Meanwhile, James used two Greek words in this passage that are frequently translated into English in very confusing ways. The first is the word “**pi-rad'-zo**”, and in various passages in English translations of the Bible, this word is translated as “**tested**”, “**tried**”, or “**tempted**”.¹⁴²

Yes, this same Greek word is used in Matthew, where it is written: **Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**¹⁴³ You see, based on the words of James, this passage should be translated “**tested**”, not “**tempted**”.

Because JESUS lived to please the Father and not Himself, He was “**tested**” not “**tempted**” in the wilderness. As JESUS said: **“He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”**¹⁴⁴

You see, because the word “**tempted**” has certain negative connotations, it is more accurate to use the word “**tested**” because that word fits with every use of the term “**pi-rad'-zo**”. Meanwhile, every situation we might label as “**a temptation**” is really a “**test**” to see if we will seek to please GOD or ourselves.

Now, this foundation of doing our heavenly Father’s will instead of our own leads us to the second Greek word James used, that is inconsistently translated into English, and that word is: “**ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah**”. In certain passages this word is rendered into English as “**lust**”, but in other passages it is translated “**desire**”.¹⁴⁵

The problem with this inconsistency is that the term “**lust**” has become a word we only apply to certain types of “**desires**” that people who are disobedient to GOD’s Commandments entertain. But any “**desire**” that leads us to pursue our own selfish wants instead of GOD’s will is a sinful “**desire**”.

¹⁴¹ James 1:13-15

¹⁴² <https://biblehub.com/greek/3985.htm>

¹⁴³ Matthew 4:1

¹⁴⁴ John 8:29

¹⁴⁵ <https://biblehub.com/greek/1939.htm>

If we live to please ourselves, we cannot obey Paul's admonition that states: **Brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.**¹⁴⁶

Yes, all desire that is not submitted to GOD's will, leads to sin. For this reason, Paul also wrote: **Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**¹⁴⁷ And this leads us to consider what we have learned from the two passages in James we read earlier.

James showed us that the selfish desires of a will not submitted to GOD are the source of conflict as well as the source of sin and death. And this leads us to the realization that deception requires our willing cooperation to succeed.

If we truly submit ourselves to GOD and trust that His Word is true, His ways are right, His Commandments are good, and His will is what is best for us, only then can we recognize truth and discard deception!

The devil's lies would have had no effect on Eve if she would have set aside her own selfish desires and held fast to GOD's Command. But she was taken captive because her rebellious desires led her to accept the false claims of the enemy.

So, this brings us to the first of two key principles that JESUS taught which will help us defeat deception. And that first principle is: **you must know GOD's will and do it, and never trust any messenger who contradicts it!**

We know this principle is true, because JESUS said: **"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"**¹⁴⁸

In that passage, the phrase **"wills to do His will"** might seem confusing until we realize the first occurrence of the word **"will"** is a verb, and the second is a noun. Likewise, in the Greek, the first word **"thel'-o"** is a verb, and the second word **"thel'-ay-mah"** is a noun.

So, in the passage, the verb **"wills"** means **"intends"** or **"desires"**. Meanwhile, the noun form of the word **"will"** is referring to GOD's **"intentions"** or **"desires"**. Therefore, JESUS said: **"If anyone desires to do GOD's will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from GOD."**

¹⁴⁶ 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2

¹⁴⁷ Galatians 5:24

¹⁴⁸ John 7:16-19

As we have previously established, it is GOD's will that we **keep** His Commandments, and those who desire to perform GOD's will must **know** His Commandments. But it is through the knowledge of GOD's Commandments that we are able to test all doctrine to determine if it is from GOD or not.

We have proven that there is not one single book of Bible that is not either directly or indirectly encouraging people to submit to the commandments of GOD. Meanwhile, it is also recorded that many generations of individuals who had access to the Word of GOD did not submit to His will!

So, this proves that the problems we see in this world cannot be blamed exclusively on a lack of **access** to the Bible. No, in many cases the problems of this world are caused by a lack of **interest** in the Bible!

Likewise, many of the world's problems can be traced back to the existence of deception, but not all of them. No, we must not forget that many people don't *desire* to submit to GOD's will, so they *prefer* deception when it is presented!

But the blessed few who really desire to do GOD's will actually know His Commandments, and they love Him by keeping His Commandments. Plus, their knowledge of His Commandments allows them to see right through those who come with a different message!

As the Scriptures declare: **You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me.**¹⁴⁹

There is a reason GOD descended to Mount Sinai to deliver His Ten Commandments to millions of witnesses! Likewise, there is a reason the HOLY SPIRIT specifically writes His law on our hearts and minds in the New Covenant. Because they are the key to truly understanding His will in every situation! Plus, those who know GOD's Commandments and keep them can distinguish between the messengers sent by our heavenly Father as well as those sent by the father of lies.

Now the second principle we can learn from the words of our LORD to defeat deception is this: **don't trust those who seek after their own glory, because GOD's trustworthy messengers only ever seek after GOD's glory!**

Remember, JESUS said: **"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his**

¹⁴⁹ Psalms 119:98-102

own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.”¹⁵⁰

The word here translated as “**doctrine**” simply means “**teaching**”. So, even JESUS did not claim that His teachings were His own! But many dangerous messengers in modern society love to teach their own personal interpretations of the Bible in a way that glorifies themselves, acting as if they were the source of the teaching!

So, knowing such evil times would come, the HOLY SPIRIT instructed through Peter: **“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”¹⁵¹**

Likewise, Paul wrote: **Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**¹⁵²

Those who preach and teach the Word of GOD must never forget that the Bible did not originate with them! They are not the source of truth, GOD is! Therefore, if they are teaching anything that originated from them, then what they are teaching is not true! The life-giving message of the Bible that has set us free from sin and granted us eternal salvation through the blood of JESUS contains all we need for life and godliness in CHRIST, just as it was written 2000 years ago. It is indispensable, but those who teach it are not!

So, since JESUS gave us two things to look for to recognize trustworthy messengers, let us now consider seven symptoms of a sick messenger that we should not consider a reliable communicator of GOD’s Word! Yes, just like we can recognize someone who is sick by symptoms like a cough, a fever, or sinus congestion, there are signs to watch out for that indicate someone is a false teacher.

And the first symptom we will consider, we just learned from the teaching of our LORD. He said: **“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory”**, so we must beware of the symptom of **self-promotion**. When many false teachers speak, they tend to present unique private interpretations not supported by the text to glorify themselves, and this is a sign of a serious illness!

A submissive, loyal messenger of a king delivers the king’s messages in a way that glorifies the one he serves, and such a messenger is careful to deliver the message as precisely as possible. But, a self-centered, disloyal messenger either delivers

¹⁵⁰ John 7:16-19

¹⁵¹ 1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁵² 1 Corinthians 10:31

messages from the king in a way that glorifies themselves, or they don't accurately deliver the message the king sent them to communicate!

About this JESUS also said: **“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”**¹⁵³

Even JESUS our Creator did not get creative with the message the Father gave him to speak! Likewise, all reliable messengers who walk in the MESSIAH's footsteps know that accuracy is more important than popularity.

Reliable messengers communicate the message just as it was delivered to them in Scripture, while helping everyone understand exactly what was written. So, when people hear GOD's Word and respond, they will be saved. But if they modify the message to make it more interesting to their audience or to gain the praise of men, they will dilute the power and effectiveness of the message.

Imagine a doctor that focused more on what their patients thought of them than on helping their patients. Should you trust a doctor who is more concerned with their popularity over the healing of their patients? Definitely not. Likewise, we should be wary of teachers who focus more on style than substance.

The power of GOD's Word to set us free from sin so we can walk in the way of righteousness is the focus of a reliable messenger. But unreliable messengers shift the focus away from GOD and obedience to His Commandments.

Often, unreliable messengers are more concerned with selfish gain, the praise of men, usurping authority, or making a name for themselves. And this leads people into bondage, including the unreliable messenger himself. So, this brings us to the second symptom of sick messengers to watch out for.

The word **“pontiff”** was used by Julius Ceasar long before it was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church as a title of the man they call **“the pope”**. Technically the word **“pontiff”** means **“bridge builder”**, but for those who have historically used that term to refer to themselves, it has always implied a distinct sense of exclusivity. In other words, those who **“pontificate”** act as if *they alone* are the bridge to GOD.

Cults are formed when a human (or a human-founded organization) implies that they are the only ones who can understand and teach the truth of GOD's Word. Such cultish

¹⁵³ John 12:48-50

groups and leaders claim you need *both* them and the Scriptures to be saved. **So, we must beware of the symptom of pontification.**

When groups, churches, or denominations act as if only they can understand the Word of GOD, they deny the fact that GOD's Word is the truth, and it is the HOLY SPIRIT who teaches and guides us in all truth.

About this JESUS said: **"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."**¹⁵⁴

In context it was clear that JESUS was telling His Disciples that it was the HOLY SPIRIT who would come and teach them all they needed to know as He inspired them to complete the canon of Scripture.

But still to this very day, it is the HOLY SPIRIT who teaches all who seek the truth how to properly interpret the Word of GOD. So, false teachers who **pontificate** are either trying to assume the role of the HOLY SPIRIT, or claim only they can hear from Him.

About this, John wrote: **Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.**¹⁵⁵

John is explaining that we must let **the Word** of GOD "**which we have heard from the beginning**" abide in us, and if we do, we will abide in JESUS and the Father. Then he explains we don't need that anyone teach us beyond the HOLY SPIRIT, the anointing we received when we were born again. So, does this mean that we don't need to receive sound Bible instruction?

Well, Scripture also provides us with many requirements for Church overseers, who are also called bishops and elders. And Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to install such men in all the churches in every city. But one of the requirements Paul listed is that they must be "**able to teach**"¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁴ John 16:12-13

¹⁵⁵ 1 John 2:24-27

¹⁵⁶ A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach... 1 Timothy 3:2

Similarly, Paul told Timothy: **“Teach and exhort these things.”**¹⁵⁷, and **“The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”**¹⁵⁸

Did John contradict Paul? Absolutely not! What John was explaining is that the churches do not need anyone to teach us anything new, in addition to the Bible. But we still need qualified leaders to remind us of the things we have learned from the pages of holy Scripture.

Because the canon of Scripture was completed in the first century, we no longer require any new universally applicable messages from the HOLY SPIRIT. What needed to be said was said. Therefore, those who **“teach”** the Bible these days need to simply **repeat** what has already been said and help us re-discover the original intended meaning of the inspired Word of GOD. But the HOLY SPIRIT can perform this work through any qualified person, not just those who like to **pontificate**.

Also, we don't blindly accept everything human teachers say. No, like the synagogue of Berea who: **“received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”**¹⁵⁹, we check all that we hear against the Bible to verify all things.

Therefore, true messengers of GOD don't preach their own messages! No, they: **Preach the word!**¹⁶⁰ And they don't mind when people verify their messages by searching the Scriptures to see if what they teach was accurate.

They know: **Of His own will GOD brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.**¹⁶¹ No teacher but GOD can give us the words of eternal life, and His true messengers know that they are not capable of understanding those words if the HOLY SPIRIT does not first teach them.

Yes, we have **been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.**¹⁶² That good seed does not change, nor does it require updates, remodeling, or re-interpretation. And you can be sure that when you hear something that sounds new, there's a really good chance that it is also not true!

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.¹⁶³ Teachers are simply seed-sowers. Trustworthy teachers implant the unmodified seed of GOD's holy

¹⁵⁷ 1 Timothy 6:2

¹⁵⁸ 2 Timothy 2:2

¹⁵⁹ Acts 17:11-12

¹⁶⁰ 2 Timothy 4:2

¹⁶¹ James 1:18

¹⁶² 1 Peter 1:23

¹⁶³ James 1:21

Word. But false teachers plant genetically modified seeds of deception and fertilize them with temptation. So, we must be very careful who we receive the seed of the Word from in this world.

Here we should also mention the symptom of **allegorization** as a sign of a sick messenger. This is the dangerous process of reinterpreting literal passages of the Bible into symbolism. But within this process, the interpreter decides what the symbols mean instead of the HOLY SPIRIT.

For example, when a false teacher decides to believe that Charles Darwin knew more than GOD about the origin of species, they reinterpret the words of Genesis and claim that the Biblical account of creation is an allegory.

When a false teacher decides to believe that fallible sociologists know more about the origin of nations than GOD, they claim that the Biblical account of the tower of Babel is an allegory.

Yes, false teachers are very fond of imposing their own private interpretations onto literal passages of the Bible for various reasons, and by doing this they rob people of the testimony of GOD.

The HOLY SPIRIT inspired the text of the Bible, and His testimony is true. Therefore, Peter stated: **No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**¹⁶⁴ We must reject all private interpretations of the Bible because they are really a rejection of the original inspired message the HOLY SPIRIT was conveying.

Always remember that JESUS said: **“My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”**¹⁶⁵ JESUS did not say that His family consisted of those who heard the latest online teacher or televangelist. No, His family consists of those who hear His Word as it was originally handed down to us, and put it into practice.

His Word does not change, it is 100% true, and it is sufficient to thoroughly equip us for every good work. Plus, we must not forget that it is His Word that is the truth that sets us free from sin and death!

JESUS said: **“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**¹⁶⁶ The truth of GOD’s Word brings freedom from sin, confusion, despair, deception, and every other demonic tool of destruction.

¹⁶⁴ 2 Peter 1:20-21

¹⁶⁵ Luke 8:21

¹⁶⁶ John 8:31-32

But satan does not want us to be free from those things. No, **our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**¹⁶⁷ So, you can be sure that there are wolves sneaking around every true flock of our LORD's sheep.

Satan inspires such false teachers to contradict the Commandments of GOD, to seek after glory for themselves, to claim they alone are a necessary bridge to the truth, to undermine GOD's authority, and to twist the Scriptures; all to steal, kill, destroy, and scatter GOD's flock.

Typically, these false teachers do satan's bidding unaware of their service to his cause. They are unconsciously serving the devil by serving their own selfish desires. And that leads us to another symptom of a sick messenger, which we can call **decriminalization**.

The word "**decriminalize**" means: "**to change the law so that something is no longer illegal**".¹⁶⁸ And many false teachers use extremely deceptive tactics in their attempts to overturn or modify GOD's laws to justify willful sinful behavior.

About them, Peter wrote: **When they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.**¹⁶⁹

The phrase translated here as "**they speak great swelling words of emptiness**" is translated in other versions "**speaking out arrogant words of vanity**", "**speaking high-sounding but empty words**", "**talking high-sounding nonsense**", "**speaking proud words of vanity**", and "**uttering pompous sounds of folly**".

So, Peter was conveying that false teachers speak in a way that is puffed up and proud. Then he explained that their words are "**mat-ah-yot'-ace**". Thayer's Greek lexicon explains this word means "**devoid of the truth**". And Paul told Timothy something very similar.

He wrote: **If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.**¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ 1 Peter 5:8

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/decriminalize>

¹⁶⁹ 2 Peter 2:18-19

¹⁷⁰ 1 Timothy 6:3-5

You see, both passages are warning about false teachers who contradict sound doctrine, which is by definition: GOD's Word that leads us away from sin. Both passages indicate the false teacher is proud. And both passages reveal that these untrustworthy messengers are "**devoid of the truth**".

The fact that GOD's Commandments still stand and we must obey them is the foundational truth these dangerous deceivers are missing. But in their arrogance, they believe they can contradict GOD and somehow abolish His Commandments with their hollow arguments.

They develop extensive systematic theologies, exclusionary methods of interpretation, and vain philosophies to discard the portions of the Bible they don't want to obey. And they pass on their great swelling words of emptiness from generation to generation, creating massive crowds of lawless teachers, all contradicting the words GOD wrote with His own finger in stone.

Meanwhile, Peter explained that they themselves are "**slaves of corruption**" so they teach in ways that justify and normalize continuing bondage to sin.

However, JESUS said: "**Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**"¹⁷¹

Real freedom in CHRIST is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin! Therefore, anyone who contradicts that fact is an untrustworthy messenger that displays the symptom of **decriminalization**.

GOD is the Lawgiver and the Judge, and you should flee from any teacher who contradicts His Commandments as fast as you can. However, those who have not yet died to the desires of the flesh *prefer* the proud, empty words of the false teacher because they make them feel good in their sin.

They don't realize that such teachers are **slaves of sin**, and they make their living by convincing others slaves of sin that they are free. So, at the center of this cycle of bondage, there is a great tragic irony.

The false teachers and those who follow them are ultimately **refusing to submit to GOD**. They reject or explain away GOD's Commandments with empty arguments, and think they are free to keep violating His laws. But by refusing to submit to GOD, they have unwittingly submitted themselves to satan.

So, our next symptom of a sick messenger to consider can be called: **rebellion**, which means "**opposition to one in authority**"¹⁷² Obviously, false teachers don't openly

¹⁷¹ John 8:34-36

¹⁷² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rebellion>

state that they refuse to submit to GOD's authority. Instead, they imply that we don't have to.

They use pompous vain arguments while they twist the Scriptures to justify their continued **rebellion** against GOD's Commandments, but the difference between rebellion and submission is seen in our actions.

JESUS asked the pharisees an important question. He said: **“A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?”**¹⁷³

Once again, we see the repeated theme that we must do the will of our father in heaven. But the point that JESUS was making with His rhetorical question was that what we do will be the evidence that He will consider when we are judged, not what we say or believe!

Those who are rebellious like to ignore obedience and doing the will of our Father in Heaven. Instead, they like to reduce Christianity down to simply believing certain facts or making certain confessions. But all their words are just a mask for their rebellion.

JESUS told us, **“The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”**¹⁷⁴ So, if we truly believe in JESUS, we will keep His Word and do good! False teachers do not do this. They refuse to fully submit to GOD, and their rebellion is a symptom of their sickness of pride.

Most of these false teachers hide their slavery to sin and only expose who they really are when they teach others that ongoing willful sin will never face consequences. But sometimes their wickedness is exposed in the next symptom of sick messengers.

When an untrustworthy messenger's spiritual sickness reaches a certain level, and they act on the selfish desires they have been justifying with false teaching, the full-blown symptom of **corruption** appears, in ways that even unbelievers condemn.

Unbelievers are fine with sins like blasphemy, profaning the sabbath, idolatry, and maybe even a few more. But when false teachers begin to progress further into sins that even the ungodly consider wicked, even the world labels their sins as **corruption**.

But men like Ravi Zacharias did not wake up one day and decide to live corrupt lives filled with wicked actions that even the ungodly world disapproves of. No, the rotten fruit on the tree of his life grew up slowly from satanic seeds of false doctrine. He

¹⁷³ Matthew 21:28-31a

¹⁷⁴ John 5:28-29

believed the lie that teaches: the wages of sin will never be received by those who have called on JESUS and believed.

Meanwhile, Scripture warns: **If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.**¹⁷⁵ Those who deny this passage and hundreds of others like in the Bible eventually display their corruption.

And Peter writes about such people: They **“will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.”**¹⁷⁶

Here, Peter mentioned one final symptom to remember, that can help us spot spiritually sick messengers who claim to be teachers of GOD’s Word. A key word Peter used was **“pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah”**, and it means: **“a greedy desire to have more”**.

The NASB translated the portion of the verse that includes that word: **“having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children”**¹⁷⁷

How does a person who claims to be a Christian end up with a heart that is trained in covetous practices? By never hearing and obeying the truth we have seen within the Word of GOD! Brothers and Sisters, **selfish desires** are the root of all sin. They create wars, and they even make us enemies of GOD.

Selfish desires for fame or the praise of men reveal a person is not satisfied giving GOD all the glory. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teachers as **self-promotion**.

Selfish desires for power or control reveal a person is not satisfied with the position GOD has given them. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teachers as **pontification**.

Selfish desires to justify some un-Biblical concept by twisting Scripture reveal that a person is not satisfied with GOD’s Word as it has been written. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teacher as **allegorization**.

¹⁷⁵ Hebrews 10:26-27

¹⁷⁶ 2 Peter 2:13-14

¹⁷⁷ 2 Peter 2:14

Selfish desires to justify sinful behavior reveal that a person is not satisfied with GOD's condemnation of certain activities. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teacher as **decriminalization**.

Selfish desires to commit sin without facing any repercussions reveal that a person is not satisfied with GOD's Commandments. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teacher as **rebellion**.

Selfish desires to dive even deeper into sin, beyond even what unbelievers consider acceptable behavior reveals that a person is never satisfied. And that dissatisfaction often reveals itself in false teachers as **corruption**.

So, you see, **dissatisfaction** is one key symptom sick messengers exhibit. They might be dissatisfied with their finances, their marriage, their status, their popularity, or GOD's Word. But somehow their covetousness will be embedded within their teaching. Therefore, Peter tells us the selfish desires we call "**covetousness**" are the secret to their success in gathering followers and taking them captive.

He wrote: **There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.**¹⁷⁸

When we are thankful for all GOD has given us, and content to die to selfish desires so we can live to please GOD in all things, false teachers lose their grip on us! But if we allow covetousness, discontentment, and **dissatisfaction** into our hearts, false teachers can exploit us and take us captive.

So the first step we must take to prevent stumbling into deception, was given to us by Paul, who wrote: **Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.**¹⁷⁹

Those who desire to perform GOD's will can see that these words are true. Satan can only deceive us with false teaching when we refuse to die to sin and the **selfish desires** that fuel sin in the word. But satan cannot take captive those who believe and obey all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

Decontextualization and Misapplication

We have learned why the Bible truly is the Word of GOD. We have learned about the most consistent message conveyed in the Word of GOD. We have learned how we

¹⁷⁸ 2 Peter 2:1b-3a

¹⁷⁹ Colossians 3:5-7

must interpret the Bible in a submissive, harmonious, contextualized manner. Also, we have learned how, for various reasons that all are related to selfish desires being exalted over the will of GOD, false teachers twist GOD's Word and teach false doctrine.

Now with these facts in hand, we can begin to use what we have learned to analyze a current example of a dangerous false teaching recently interjected into the popular culture.

Some of the most expensive advertisements in the world occur during one of the most watched television broadcasts that occurs each year. Yet one organization has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to run commercials during the super bowl and post billboards around the nation.

The organization's stated goal is to **"reintroduce people to the Jesus of the Bible"**¹⁸⁰. This organization calls itself **"He gets us"**. So, let's look at a transcript of one of their videos. This particular ad has been viewed on YouTube over 25 million times at the time of this writing.

The video begins with a sequence of images of idle, rebelliously posed gang members with tattoos, and oversized jewelry, and several of them wearing masks like bank robbers might wear. Then a voice begins to speak with ominous music playing in the background.

The voice says: ***"A rebel took to the streets. He recruited others to join him. They quit their jobs, left their families, and swore allegiance to him. They roamed the hood, challenged authority, and made a lot of people uneasy. Community leaders feared them. Religious leaders abhorred them. Law enforcement labeled them outlaws. "We have to shut them down," they said. "Get them off the streets. Protect our communities from these troublemakers." But they weren't part of a gang spreading hate and terror... They were spreading love."***

Then, at the end of the advertisement, after switching over to an image of smiling teenagers, they show them doing acts of kindness. After which, the text on the screen states. ***"Jesus was wrongly judged" "He gets us." "All of us."*** And ***"us"*** is written in a highlighted color. Then the ad closes with the name of JESUS, and once again the letters "u" and "s" are highlighted in our LORD's name, as they were twice before.

Clearly, the message was written in such a way as to take the focus off JESUS and put it on the group they call ***"us"***. The advertiser wants to transform JESUS into the image of their version of ***"us"***, rather than see ***"us"*** transformed into His image!

Because of this, they introduce those who personally identify with the displayed images of rebellious gang members to a false version of "JESUS". They present a type of "JESUS" that appeals to ***them***. For this reason, they called the video ***"The Rebel"***, and literally call JESUS ***"a rebel"*** who ***"took to the streets"*** in the very first sentence.

¹⁸⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He_Gets_Us

Meanwhile, the Bible says: **“Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”**¹⁸¹ For this reason, rebellion has always been a sin punishable by death.

Hebrews warns: **While it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice”, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?**¹⁸²

Also, GOD commanded: **“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.”**¹⁸³

Yes, in Scripture being a rebel led to *death* every time! Over two hundred and fifty men who participated in the *rebellion* of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were all destroyed by the LORD. So, calling JESUS a *rebel* is the same as calling JESUS “an evil sinner”! Meanwhile, Scripture teaches: **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good.”**

“But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”¹⁸⁴

Those who actually know the Bible can see that GOD is against all forms of rebellion. But the **“He Gets Us”** organization is taking JESUS out of the doctrinal, theological, and historical context the Bible presents Him in, to teach a false version of JESUS that

¹⁸¹ 1 Samuel 15:23a

¹⁸² Hebrews 3:15-17

¹⁸³ Deuteronomy 21:18-21

¹⁸⁴ Romans 13:1-7

literally promotes a sin. Therefore, this ad is a perfect example of the dangerous error of **decontextualization**.

Any Biblical verse, idea, or person can be taken out of the context it was carefully presented in and twisted to **prove** almost any proposition or **approve** of nearly any action. Therefore, taking Biblical verses, ideas, or people out of context to support a proposition is **decontextualization**.

Satan took a Psalm out of context to try to convince JESUS to commit suicide. But JESUS was not deceived by that twisted use of Scripture. Instead, He replied with a verse that perfectly applied to the situation He faced, just as it perfectly applied in its original context!

Matthew records: **“Then the devil took JESUS up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, ‘It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”**”¹⁸⁵

Often satan and his messengers use decontextualization as weapons of spiritual warfare against GOD’s people, so we must keep the context of every passage, concept, doctrine, and person found in Scripture in mind to avoid being cheated of our eternal inheritance by philosophy and empty deceit.

Paul warned: **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**¹⁸⁶

Likewise, he taught: **A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**¹⁸⁷

Deception always leads to slavery and truth always leads to freedom. For example, if someone was deceived by the lie in the video we just examined and thought they could live as a rebel while still following JESUS, satan would have successfully taken their soul captive with the sin of rebellion.

Meanwhile, JESUS came to lead rebels back to submission to His Father. He said: **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**¹⁸⁸, **“I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”**¹⁸⁹, **“I tell you, no; but unless you repent**

¹⁸⁵ Matthew 4:5-7

¹⁸⁶ Colossians 2:8

¹⁸⁷ 2 Timothy 2:24-26

¹⁸⁸ Matthew 4:17

¹⁸⁹ Matthew 9:13

you will all likewise perish.”¹⁹⁰, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”¹⁹¹, and that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations”¹⁹².

To repent, a person must agree with GOD’s Commandments that sin is wrong, they must decide to stop sinning, which is simply rebellion against GOD’s Law. Then when a rebel repents and submits to GOD’s Commandments, they must ask GOD to forgive their sins through the sacrifice JESUS made for us at His cross.

If they truly die to rebellion against GOD, which is what sin really is, it is like they have crucified their old sinful ways to walk with JESUS in the Way of righteousness and obedience to GOD.

So, at their baptism, they symbolically bury the rebellious sinner they once were, and they rise from the water a new creation in JESUS, ready to submissively keep the Commandments of GOD going forward.

If they stumble back into sin, a true Christian understands that they need to repent once again and die to the thinking and temptations that led them back into rebellion against GOD’s commands. So, they re-surrender to GOD, and they ask the LORD to cleanse and restore them. Thus, they metaphorically get back on the road of salvation, following JESUS to an eternal resurrection of the righteous to live forever in His heavenly kingdom.

That is the “**repentance and remission of sins**” that JESUS and His Apostles preached, and that true gospel faithfully teaches all people to obey all GOD has commanded! Like JESUS said: “**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.**”¹⁹³

But false teachers ignore these and many other verses and create a “JESUS” of their own imaginations who preaches a different message than the one our Savior preaches.

For this reason, our LORD warned: “**Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many.**”¹⁹⁴ Many false teachers these days are teaching counterfeit saviors. But just like real paper money has security features to distinguish a true bill from counterfeit currency, there are security features given to us in Scripture to help us distinguish between the real JESUS and the counterfeits.

¹⁹⁰ Luke 13:3

¹⁹¹ Revelation 3:19

¹⁹² Luke 24:47b

¹⁹³ Matthew 28:19-20a

¹⁹⁴ Mark 13:5-6



In many currencies, there is what they call a security thread embedded into the bill. Here we see a photo of the security thread in a United States 20-dollar bill glowing as it is held up to an ultraviolet light. On different U.S. bills, the thread is located in different places and glows a different color under UV light, but it is present in all bills except for one-dollar and two-dollar denominations.

Meanwhile, we recently proved the Bible also has a security thread that runs through nearly every book. Yes, the security thread that GOD had placed in the Bible is His Commandments. In fact, GOD even placed His Commandments into His Creation as a security thread when He created all things.

Since GOD alone is the creator of all things, He alone is GOD. Since He is more glorious than all of His creation, we cannot make an image of Him that can accurately represent His glory, nor can we bow down to images or pray to them. Since His name is above all other words in the universe, we must not take His name in vain. And since He created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, which He also made holy, all of His creation must rest on that day too.

Similarly, since He brought all humans into the world through a father and a mother, we must honor our mother and father. Since He made mankind after His image, we must

treat all who bear His image with kindness and never commit murder. Since He made marriage between one man and one woman the only authorized situation for romance, we must not commit adultery. Since He provides all mankind with what they have as He sees fit, we must not steal. Since He established reality and truth and made them orderly and constant throughout all of His Creation, we must not bear false witness and contradict the truth. And since He generously supplies us with all we need for each day, we must not covet what He has given our neighbor.

Yes, the security thread of His Commandments even runs throughout all of the things He has created. So, JESUS taught: **Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**¹⁹⁵

This means that we can tell if a teacher is trustworthy based on whether they **keep** and **teach** GOD's Commandments. Also, we can recognize if a teacher is presenting a false portrait of JESUS if their presentation of JESUS does not **promote** keeping GOD's Commandments.

So, just like you can investigate a bill to see if it is counterfeit by holding it up to the light and looking for the tell-tale security thread, you can test every message by holding up to the light of GOD's Word and checking to make sure the security thread of submissive obedience to GOD's Commandments is present.

Now, let us consider another advertisement the group "**He Gets Us**" produced, that ran in this year's super bowl. The ad contains a series of pictures of one person washing someone else's feet, so it is entitled "Foot Washing". There is no voice speaking in this ad, just a somber modern performance of a song entitled "Never Tear Us Apart", originally produced in 1988 by a secular Australian group of musicians who called themselves INXS.

¹⁹⁵ Matthew 5:18-19 ESV



The first image is set in the environment of a typical American home. Four people are located in the dining room, A young man is washing the feet of an older man, while an older woman and a younger woman look on. It seems safe to assume the older man and woman are the father and the mother, and it appears that the younger woman is their daughter. This leads to the conclusion that the young man washing the old man's feet is most likely his son.

To gather more contextual information so we can interpret the message this picture is meant to convey, we should now consider what is written on the website where this image was downloaded. There, the "He Gets Us" organization explains its message in this ad firsthand.

They write: **"The night before he died, Jesus got his friends and followers together and washed their feet as a symbolic example of how they should humble themselves while dignifying and valuing others. He then instructed them to wash one another's feet. We were intrigued by this idea. To us, foot washing symbolizes the act of removing the ego from the self, setting differences aside, and actively showing love to others."**¹⁹⁶

Then they ask: **"What if foot washing was part of our modern culture? We reimagined a world where people, especially those with opposing ideologies, took off their shoes and washed each other's feet. The images create a surreal and magical view of human interaction that we could all aspire to."**

¹⁹⁶ <https://hegetsus.com/en/articles/foot-washing-image-gallery>

It seems like these Christians don't recognize that magic is evil. It also appears that they have once again decontextualized JESUS washing the feet of His Disciples, which we will discuss later.

Nevertheless, to avoid confusion, we should note here that the word **“Ideology”** means: **“a set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organization is based.”**¹⁹⁷ So, each picture represents in some way people with opposing beliefs and principles washing one another's feet.

With this in mind, we note the young man (we assume to be the son) who is washing his father's feet has some subtle features to suggest how his foundational beliefs and principles differ from those of his father. His hair appears to be dyed based on the color difference closer to his scalp, he has a tattoo and earring, and his hairstyle is somewhat unique, especially compared to the hairstyles of his family.

There is not enough data in this picture to see how these two are ideologically opposed to one another, but we can ask: **“Does this picture promote honoring our fathers and our mothers?”** Does that son appear to be living in a way that is consistent with the will of his parents or more importantly, the will of GOD? Is this picture somehow justifying rebellion against one's parents? Perhaps.



In the second picture, the environment is a dirty urban alley. A young man is having his feet washed by a police officer who is down on his knees. Because we know the point of this ad campaign is to show people of opposing beliefs and principles washing each

¹⁹⁷ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/ideology>

other's feet, we must assume the young man is somehow opposed to the beliefs and principles of law enforcement.

He might be opposed to the police because he violated the law, or perhaps he opposes law enforcement because certain officers violated the rights of people who looked like him in the past. It is hard to know if racism or criminal behavior is implied in this photograph, but we should ask: is this picture reinforcing or undermining the Biblical commandment to submit to authority? Namely, does it teach: **“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”**¹⁹⁸



The third picture is set in a high school hallway. Here among other students, a girl wearing a shirt that says “perfect” washes the feet of another girl sitting on a skateboard with her “Doc Marten” boots sitting to one side. The girl on the skateboard also has her hair cut very short and dyed red. So, with her painted black nails, unconventional hairstyle, and footwear choice, she is definitely making a statement. In an article on Linked-In, Tom Thompson writes: **“In the 1960s, Dr. Martens became associated with the anti-establishment movement. The boots were adopted by mods, rockers, and other subcultures who were rebelling against the mainstream. Dr. Martens became a symbol of rebellion and individuality.”**¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Romans 13:1

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/dr-martens-workplace-balancing-fashion-tom-thomson/>

So far, we are beginning to see a subtle theme in the advertisement that matches the theme we noticed earlier, and that theme is that rebellion should be normal and acceptable.



The next picture is set in an American southwestern desert. In this picture, it seems a cowboy is washing the feet of an Indian. This is the first photograph in the series that does not seem to have subtle undertones of rebellion, so there is no reason to object to this scene. However, satan often mixes his deceptions with truth so the undiscerning will accept lies and facts as equals.



Meanwhile, the fifth picture in the ad is set outside of an infanticide clinic. On the sidewalk, a young woman sits on a bench with one foot in an old porcelain surgical pan, while the other foot is held by a middle-aged woman who is washing her feet. Nearby, is a group holding signs that speak truth to the women who enter the clinic to murder their babies. But they have their signs down at their sides as if the young woman on the bench already made her decision and had her baby murdered. If she had not yet entered the so-called “clinic”, the group would have their signs up, pleading with her not to take the life of her unborn child. But they seem to have given up trying to convince her, indicating she just came out of that wicked building. Meanwhile, another disgusting detail the image includes is the surgical pan her feet are being washed in. That is the type of pan murdered babies are placed in after they are torn apart, limb from limb inside their mother’s womb in a surgical abortion. That pan is a tool of murder, but in the image, it is incorporated as if to make the horrible message clearer. Yes, the message suggests we should have intimate fellowship with murderers immediately after they commit their heinous crimes.



Similarly, the next image is set in a messy kitchen filled with empty bottles of alcohol. Two women are on the floor, and the younger woman is washing the feet of the older woman, who has empty bottles, a half-empty glass, and a burning cigarette lying next to her. This image happened to have a title embedded in the coding of the website, that confirmed it is of an “addict”, meaning a woman who is addicted, most likely to alcohol. The title also indicates it is her daughter who is washing her mother’s feet even as her mother is in a state of drunkenness. So, once again, the ad is encouraging intimate fellowship with a sinner, even while they actively rebel against GOD.

However, Scripture teaches: **“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. And certainly not with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since you ought to come out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.”**²⁰⁰



Then, after two very deceptive, counter-biblical photos, the next photo does not necessarily oppose the Bible. No, here in an oilfield an oilfield worker washes the feet of a young female environmentalist, so other than some modesty issues that need to be resolved, this image is not encouraging or normalizing sin, as far as we can tell. But, once again the ad mixes benign images with the malignant, using the deceptive tool of false equivalence. There is no Biblical reason for a cowboy and an Indian to be ideologically opposed. Likewise, there is no Biblical reason for an environmentalist and an oil worker to be opposed. But there are Biblical reasons we must oppose abortion, drunkenness, and rebellion.



In their next photo, a bus is dropping off migrants who have entered the country illegally. The bus, with a star on a white license plate, is presumably from Texas. But based on the sign on the bus, it is now in a suburban Chicago neighborhood unloading its passengers. In front of the bus, a woman is shown washing the feet of a female migrant who is also holding a baby.

Once again, we see another photograph meant to minimize the breaking of the law. In this case, it is the laws of the United States that were broken. In several other photographs, it was GOD's laws that were broken. But a theme is emerging and that theme seems to encourage rebellion and lawlessness.



The next photo is set in the front yard of an average American home. A seated husband watches as his kneeling wife washes the feet of a hijab-wearing woman while her husband stands by her side. There is no indication in the image that the older couple is Christian, but clear indications that the younger couple is Muslim. So, the message is that we should have intimate fellowship with those who worship a different GOD, follow different commandments, and reject JESUS and His Word.



The next image is set in the middle of a fierce debate. One side supports censorship of what they call: “hate speech”. The other side opposes such censorship. But two young women sit on the steps between the two sides, as one washes the other’s feet. Meanwhile, in the world, the Bible is increasingly being labeled as “hate speech” by those who are in rebellion against GOD. Many people are being penalized at this time in history for citing Bible verses in the military, in the workplace, online, and in public places. So censorship can be a Biblical issue. In fact, the Bible itself forbids certain types of speech, such as blasphemy and reviling. Therefore, censorship of what the Bible forbids is good, but censorship of the Bible is evil. Meanwhile, two sides of a general argument finding peace while neither opposes the Bible is a good thing.



Likewise, the next photograph set on the front porch of a simple southern diner, is also a good thing. It depicts two older gentlemen washing one another’s feet, sitting together, regardless of their so-called “race”. Since “race” is a secular concept, not a Biblical one, and all men are created in the image of GOD, it is good for people who have genetic differences to be peaceable with each other. But this photograph is included to establish a moral equivalence once again. Racism is indeed a sin, and we must judge people based on the content of their character not the color of their skin. So, in this photo, both sides are repudiating the immorality of racism, and this is good.

But in many of the other photos, people were shown compromising their morality by intimately fellowshiping with immoral people, occasionally while they practiced their immorality.



Obviously, that is the message of the final photograph in the ad. In a park along the beach, a young man with shaved legs, short shorts, earrings, and an effeminate posture is having his feet washed by an older man dressed in black with a clergyman's collar, who is also wearing a large cross. The older man is clearly a Christian minister and the younger man is evidently a homosexual.

So, the ad contends that we should have intimate fellowship with those who are actively rebelling against GOD's Commandments. It mixes together scenes that do not oppose GOD's laws with scenes that most certainly do oppose the Bible. Thus, it consistently presents a false equivalency between cultural schisms and moral divisions based on Scripture.

The ad suggests we should show support to everyone, even as they sin against GOD. It implies that we must set aside Biblical principles and embrace all people everywhere. Then it ends with these words appearing on the screen. "JESUS DIDN'T TEACH HATE." "HE WASHED FEET."

Who hates homosexuals more: the person who encourages them to repent so they can escape from GOD's wrath towards sinners, or the person who contradicts the Bible and makes them comfortable in their sin?

Indeed, JESUS did not teach hate, but He did preach that sinners must repent! And telling sinners to repent is more loving than pretending they will not be judged by GOD for their violations of His Commandments.

So, JESUS said: **“Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”**²⁰¹

So, you see they are presenting a strawman argument when they say “JESUS DIDN’T TEACH HATE”. No one is saying we ought to hate sinners! No, we are to tell them to repent, and we can explain that we were sinners in need of repentance once just like them. So, it is not preaching “hate” to tell them to repent. In fact, we warn them because we care about them and want them to be saved!

When we watch this ad, a tiny part of us is tempted to accept it. Satan whispers: It would be easier to just be friends with everyone, no matter what they believe or how they act. But the Bible says friendship with the world is hostility against GOD. We are told to come out from those who don’t obey GOD’s Commandments. Actually, JESUS told us to shake the dust off our feet as a testimony against those who refuse to hear His Word and repent.²⁰²

Therefore, James wrote: **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**²⁰³

Those who produced this ad are promoting friendship with the world instead of the Biblical message that explains: **“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”**²⁰⁴

Meanwhile, foot washing was never something JESUS did with the public at large. No, He did not even wash the feet of the majority of His followers, only His Twelve hand-picked Disciples. So, there is a very specific theological context to Biblical foot washing that the “He Gets Us” organization ignored as they produced their deceptive ad.

John recorded in the 13th chapter of His gospel that JESUS shared the Passover²⁰⁵ with His disciples. Then, after that sacred meal, JESUS took off His outer garments, filled a bowl with water, washed His closest disciples’ feet, and dried them with the towel He had wrapped around Himself.

This event took place at a very specific time, just after the Passover meal. It occurred in a very specific place, within the room where they ate that holy meal. Also, JESUS

²⁰¹ Luke 13:2-5

²⁰² “And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” Luke 9:5

²⁰³ James 4:4

²⁰⁴ Acts 17:30-31

²⁰⁵ Luke 22:8, 11, 15

did this to a very specific and select group of people He knew for at least three and a half years. Finally, this specific foot washing was pointing towards the priestly role JESUS was stepping into. On that same day, JESUS was going to be crucified as the Lamb of GOD who takes away the sin of the world, making Him our eternal High Priest.

So, His disciples were being prepared that night to serve as priests, to lead the world to JESUS after His sacrifice was accomplished. Judas forfeited his priestly role through his betrayal of JESUS, but that night JESUS even washed the feet of His betrayer. So, why did JESUS only wash their feet, not their whole bodies? Well, dirty feet were not only a practical problem caused by rudimentary footwear and walking as a means of transportation, there is a profound spiritual symbolism behind His washing of their feet.

JESUS cleanses us by His blood from all the stains of sin, but we live in a fallen world full of sin and deception. In a spiritual sense, our feet encounter the filth of the world each day, so our High Priest must cleanse them of the world's spiritual impurities that always seek to contaminate us.

He washes us completely clean with His blood and the water of His Word, but our feet need special attention because of the unredeemed world we walk in. So, when we understand that Biblical principle, we can understand why JESUS said to Peter: **“He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”**²⁰⁶

In another place, JESUS said: **“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”**²⁰⁷ Yes, when we hear and obey the Word of GOD, we are washed clean of our old evil ways of thinking. And this matches the writings of Paul. He explained: **“Christ ...loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”**²⁰⁸

So, Peter had heard the LORD's teaching, he believed it, and most importantly, he obeyed it. This meant only his feet needed to be washed. Therefore, when we understand these facts, we can see how counterbiblical it is to wash the feet of an unrepentant rebel, drunkard, murderer, or sexually immoral man.

They need to hear the Word of GOD and repent to be cleansed by the blood of JESUS. They don't need false assurances from deceived Christians that encourage them in their rebellion against GOD.

It is true that JESUS gets us, meaning He understands us, what we are facing, and the hardships of our lives. So, Hebrews explains: **We do not have a High Priest who**

²⁰⁶ John 13:10

²⁰⁷ John 15:3

²⁰⁸ Ephesians 5:25-27

cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.²⁰⁹

But the fact is, the “He Gets Us” organization funded by the Green family of Hobby Lobby does not “get” JESUS. Because the JESUS of the Bible said: **“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”²¹⁰**

Calling on people to repent through rebuke and chastening is like knocking on their door. If they do repent, it is like them opening the door. And only after they repent, do we come in and fellowship with them. That is the pattern our LORD taught us. That is how JESUS establishes fellowship.

But “He Gets Us” does not “get” the LORD’s teachings. They don’t understand the security thread His Prophets always included in their doctrine. So, they are not trustworthy messengers of the Gospel of JESUS Christ. But we only know this because we fully rely on all of the Bible and the Bible alone.

²⁰⁹ Hebrews 4:15

²¹⁰ Revelation 3:19-20